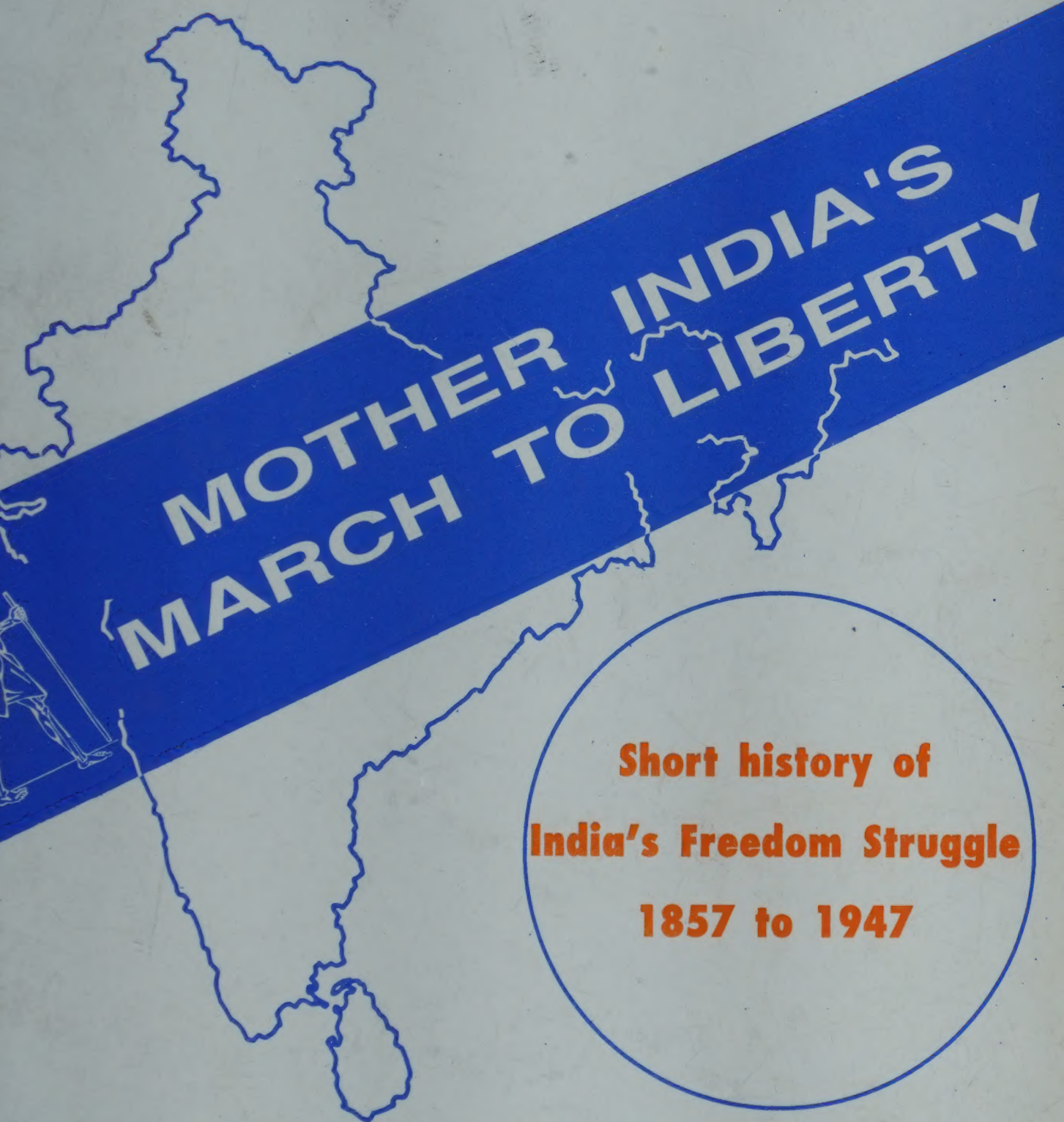




**Short history of
India's Freedom Struggle
1857 to 1947**

K.S. Narayana Swamy

MOTHER INDIA'S MARCH TO LIBERTY



A Short History of India's Struggle for Freedom 1857-1947

By

K.S. NARAYANASWAMY

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION
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Preface

We are celebrating the 50th year of India's freedom from the political subjugation to a foreign power suffered for over 150 years. This struggle has been a unique and unprecedented event along the history of the world. All wars are fought between two well trained armed military forces on either side recklessly destroying each other. Hatred, violence, vengeance and mass murder are taken to be lawful in such conflicts. It reduces human beings to a state of beasts. But India's struggle blazed an entirely new path to reconcile political conflicts keeping intact the virtues of peace, freedom and equality. The collective organised moral forces of an unarmed people as a whole fought with indomitable courage, sacrifice and determination against a mighty empire without the aid of military forces or of diabolical weapons of mass destruction. The world is now realising that bloodthirsty and destructive warfare with all the modern weapons of mass annihilation will spell the doom of mankind.

To move towards a peaceful, just, mutually cooperative humane society where there is no war and no slavery of any kind is the goal of man's progress. The U.N.O. is putting all its efforts to stop these barbaric wars of violence and solve conflicts through dialogue, discussion and peaceful negotiations. India's experiment in her struggle for freedom called the method of 'nonviolent Sathyagraha' is the first ever effort in this direction carried to success by Gandhiji. Its success lies in the fact that sworn enemies became friends and parted company without bitterness. The theory, that of waging "War to end all wars" is becoming obsolete in world politics.

Dr. Radhakrishnan, the philosopher president of India wrote :

"In the progress of societies three stages are marked. The first where the law of the jungle prevails with all its violence and self aggrandisement. The second where there is the rule of law and impartial justice with courts, police and prisons. The third where we have nonviolence and unselfishness, where love and law are one. This last stage is the goal of civilized humanity and it is brought nearer by the life and work of men like Gandhiji."

It is in this context that students of history must study and understand the struggle for India's freedom. This short narration of that event is just an aid to a wider deeper search into the great significance of mother India's march to liberty.

It was under the guidance and expert advice of the well-known educationist Prof. S.R. Rohidekar former professor of education, Bangalore University that this project of educating students to know and understand Indias struggle that I wrote this short history.

Vetern freedom fighter, former Governor of Maharastra and Tamilnadu and presently Chairman Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Delhi, has kindly written a foreword. Sri. Ravindra Varma another participant in the struggle and now chairman Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi has given a valuable introductory note. I am deeply grateful to these esteemed and devoted patriots for the same. I must thank Sri. Shailesh Bandopadhyaya Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi for his loving cooperation in bringing out the book. My thanks are also due to Sri. Kulkarni of the Bangalore centre and to Mr. Gopalakrishna of Lavanya Mudrana of Bangalore for their valuable help in publishing this volume.

- K.S. Narayanaswamy

Foreword

Here is a short history of India's unique struggle for freedom. A question may well be asked why another book on a subject on which numerous books are already in the market. It is true the subject of India's valiant march to freedom has received enough attention of our scholars, social thinkers and freedom fighters and yet the subject continues to be one of deep current interest. Various viewpoints are urged to justify various interpretations some of which could well be regarded as wild and largely fantastic.

Our struggle for freedom was unique in that it was predominantly nonviolent. It produced a galaxy of distinguished men and women who brought to the struggle their distinctive gifts and capacities and gave it a new quality of leadership. Above all it gave us Mahatma Gandhi whose thought and life continues to be a guide to mankind in many of its difficult moments in the march to peace, freedom and equality. Further, our struggle for freedom was by no means purely political, the ending of political subjection to a foreign power. It sought to extend it, especially in its later stages, to the social and economic freedom of man. The awakening to freedom also threw up many valuable social movements which changed the character of the whole Indian society. There is much else that could be said in the same strain.

My friend and colleague Sri K.S. Narayan Swamy has given us a readable book on the subject of how India wrought her freedom. It is a concise, connected account of our struggle from its earliest beginnings in the nineteenth century. He laid especial emphasis on the birth and growth of the Congress and how it became the chief instrument for accomplishing the emancipation of the country. It has not forgotten the part played by our brave revolutionaries who belonged to the cult of violence. It was no easy struggle we waged, It had its ups and downs & innumerable workers had to go through the fire of suffering for a great cause. The saddest part of the story is of course the partition of the country.

Our countrymen should be grateful to Shri S.K. Narayan Swamy for placing in their hands a good, brief and lively account of how and why India struggled for her freedom. We hope the book will have a wide readership.

Sadiq Ali

Freedom Fighter, Former
Governor of Maharashtra & Tamilnadu
Chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi

Introduction

History is not a mere chronicle of events. It is a multi-dimensional effort to understand and depict all the factors that acted and reacted on each other and resulted in events that transformed society. One has to relate and examine what conditioned and prompted action, the goals and emotions that inspired people, the role of individuals and institutions, and a host of other ingredients. It is a very difficult task. The history of a people's struggle for Independence is undoubtedly thrilling to describe, but it is not easy to recapture the emotions or dynamics of people's action.

India's struggle for Independence was unique in more ways than one. No other struggle for Independence anywhere has seen such extensive participation by the masses of common people, - men, women and children. They could participate because the struggle was waged with a new weapon, non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience or Satyagraha. There was nothing passive about the struggle. It was a heroic struggle in which common people demonstrated the power that lay dormant in them. Every state, town and village of the country became a battlefield, and created history.

In fact, the will to fight for Independence never withered in the country. The battle for Independence that was waged in 1857, the many sporadic struggles that took place thereafter in many parts of the country, the determination and spirit of defiance with which attempts were made at armed resistance or attempts on the symbols and centres of British power or persons who were the symbols of British domination, all kept the fire of rebellion burning. Indians never reconciled to slavery. With the coming of Satyagraha, the common people got an opportunity to show their readiness to pay the price of freedom.

It is now 50 years since our country became free. In these years many new generations have been born in the country. Some of those who belong to these generations have heard accounts of the struggle from surviving eye-witnesses or members of their families who proudly recall what their grand-parents did during the struggle, how they paid for freedom with their lives or loss of

property or loss of limbs, or many years of suffering in prison. But there are many in the new generations who are not familiar with the struggle, who do not even realize that freedom had to be fought for, that it did not come back to us for the asking, or out of the generosity of someone. The nation had to pay a price, and it paid the price because it valued freedom. Those who enjoy the freedom that was purchased with suffering owe it to themselves and the earlier generations to be aware of the struggle and the values for which it was fought, and the heroic events and personalities of the struggle.

Shri Narayanswamy has succeeded in the space of a few pages, to take us through the many phases of the struggle and give the reader a glimpse of the glorious struggle, and the inspiring values and ethos of the struggle. I am sure the book will be of great value to the younger generations in the country.

Ravindra Varma

Chairman

Gandhi Peace Foundation

New Delhi

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CHAPTER - I

Our Beloved Motherland

Our India is one of the most ancient countries of the World. Two thousand years before Jesus Christ was born India had developed a great civilization in human history. The ancient people of Greece from the west and people of ancient China in the north looked upon our country as the mother of a well ordered civilized and progressive society guided by wise men and women. Before the Christian era both kings and philosophers from other countries came as seekers of wealth and knowledge to our country and have left records of glorious tributes to the achievements of our great forefathers. We feel proud when we read them and visions of a great past become green. For thousands of years our people have settled down on the fertile banks of the rivers Indus, Ganga and Yamuna in the north. A similar great civilization flourished in the south below the Vindhya mountains descending down to the present Srilanka. The northern people were known as Aryans and the people of the south were known as Dravidians. The foundations of the culture of India were the same from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, from Hindukush to Assam. We are Indians first and Indians last whatever be our language, our region and our way of life. All our ancient poets, philosophers and saints have praised mother India in glorious terms. All of us today are descendents of those ancient forefathers and have inherited the same identity of belonging to one nation called India that is Bharath. Our country is also known as Hindustan from times immemorial.

"Mother and Motherland are greater than heaven" (Janani Janma-Bhumischa Swargathapi ganiyasi) is an immortal edict carved in the hearts and minds of all our countrymen by the wise sages of

the past. They sang the glory of this land of seven great mountain ranges from the Himalayas to the Nilgiris or the blue mountains of the southernmost tip. They worshipped seven rivers and every morning the traditional Indian prayers carried the names of the Ganga, the Yamuna, Saraswathi, Godavari, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri. "The story of the Ganga", exclaims Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his book *Discovery of India*, from her source to the sea, from old times to new, is the story of India's civilization and culture, of the rise and fall of empires, of great and proud cities, of the adventures of man and the quest of the mind which has so occupied India's thinkers, of the richness and fulfilment of life as well as its denial and renunciation, of ups & downs, and growth and decay, of life and death".

More than everything else the people are the living content of a country. The richness of our diverse population fills us with an emotional upsurge that binds us together and builds a sense of belonging to each other. The stalwart Pathan of the north west frontier, the handsome Kashmiri, the virile Punjabi, the docile Gujarathi, the devout Maharashtrian, the gentle Kannadiga, the adventurous people of Kerala, the hardworking Tamilian, the rebellious Andhra, the kind Oriya and the proud Bengali rub shoulders and continuously weave chords of affection that have contributed to the inner immutable vitality of our great nation. Hundreds and thousands of pious and devout men and women of our great land have been journeying from Varanasi to Rameswaram and from Dwaraka to Jagannathpuri from times immemorial, strengthening the bonds of a single vast humanity that inhabit mother India. This unity of hearts and these bonds of kinship are unbreakable. In spite of several setbacks during the long march of our history we have unwaveringly remained Indian. The Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Parsis, the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Christians pursuing different religious traditions of their faith have all inherited the same common culture of India and are distinctly different from other nationalities like the Chinese, the Afgans, the Africans, the Europeans, the Russians or the Americans. All founders of world's great religions were born in Asia. The ethical and moral principles that all of them have taught are essentially the same. Love, brotherhood, compassion and pursuit of moral principles in all walks of life are the common inherited qualities of a truly religious

person whatever faith he belongs to. Selfish aggressions and violent adventures have quite often marked the history of religious traditions. But the vast majority of common people of India have instinctively rejected all inhuman atrocities perpetrated by the intruders. They have worked for an ever evolving progress towards harmony and concord. India belongs to these simple affectinate peace-loving hard working common people of India. It is the progressive endeavour of millions of such Indians that is responsible for the solid foundations of a united India.

Our India virtually lives in her five and half lacs of villages. The Indian villages have a tradition of over five thousand years. Strong foundations were laid by the farming communities that settled-down on agriculture and developed an essentially peaceful close-knit small societies. The chief concern of the villager was to supplicate mother earth to yield her plenty in order to sustain human life. In this sacred task every inhabitant involved himself and served to the best of his ability. The teacher, the soldier, the merchant and the labourer had defined areas of work each reaping his reward out of the produce of the soil. This life-style flourished for thousands of years giving a stable socio-economic base on inherited professions that continues even today, Unfortunately foreign invasion broke up the stability and security of village life and made them poor and exploited. Yet the Indian villager has stood the test of time and remains a peaceful cultured individual with a rough exterior. It was Mahatma Gandhi the father of our nation that powerfully drew our attention to develop a sense of our belonging to the villages of India. He wrote in his paper 'Harijan' in 1939 thus:

"In the case of the Indian villager, an ageold culture is hidden under the encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you will find the finest specimen of what a cultured cultivated free citizen should be"

A sense of pride in belonging to India runs in the veins of every person born on this soil. But the glory of a past cannot sustain our great civilization unless every generation develops a deep sense of patriotism and translates it to action to carryforward the values of freedom, peace, and honest labour handed over to them by their forefathers.

In the course of our long history we have often failed to hold the throne of mother-India in its pristine glory due to our weaknesses. We will see in the succeeding chapters how we succumbed to foreign invasions and lost our freedom, and how again Mother India marched to her liberty.

CHAPTER - II

How India was Enslaved

When Europe, Central Asia, Africa and the Americas were still in the dark ages of tribal habitations, India had built up a number of small and wealthy kingdoms. National wealth was abundant. Men and women of learning and endeavour guided the growth of a splendoured land looked upon by the rest of the world as the richest nation. Invaders, conquerors, traders and seekers of spiritual knowledge were all attracted to her borders. The great oceans in the south, the east and the west protected our long coastline. The early emigrants came from the only opening on the North Western tip of the great Himalayas. The famous Khyber pass was discovered and hordes of adventurers came into India.

The Persians, the Kushans, the Hunes from Central Asia and Mangolia were the earliest newcomers. The Arabs, the Afghans and Moguls came later. Among the important kings that came with armies to conquer us were Alexander, Timur, Nadir Shaw, Ahmad Shah Abdali and others. They did not settle down in our country. The conquerors who established permanent empires over north India were the Turks in early middle ages and the Mughals later. The well known invasions of Mohmud of Ghazni, Shahabuddin Ghorī, and Babar mark a great turn in our history. The great empires as that of Mouryas, Kushans or Guptas slowly disintergrated and made way to the Moghuls and their dynasty who ruled India for over four hundred years.

But all these millions of people who came soon became completely Indian citizens. The different cultures mingled together. A multi religious, multi lingual, multicoloured nation emerged. New kingdoms were established. Agriculture and trade in spices, jewellery

and gold became the main occupations for livelihood for a vast majority of people who settled down in the well-established villages of India. A new ruling class emerged. They built cities and forts to establish regional authority. The common people were subjugated to royal dynasties as working masses to produce wealth and make over a large portion to their ruling elite. Innumerable number of army units under each ruler were maintained both for expansion of territories of each kingdom and also to defend themselves from enemies. Although people of different religious faiths lived in all these principalities, the royal dynasties were monopolised by single religious sects. There were Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim rulers all over the country closely guarding their religious identities. Whenever there was a war, places of religious worship were ruthlessly destroyed. Hatred between religious groups grew enormously. The common people were deliberately divided into communal groups to fight and destroy each other. From the 15th century onwards the unity of India began to be shattered step by step by the small and big wars between Kings, Nawabs and Maharajas. This was the beginning of our decline.

When in 1498 Vascodigama reached the port of Calicut in south India, a new era began. He was from Portugal, Ship-building and voyage on seas to long distances were strongly established. The coastline of India also became vulnerable to both benefactors and enemies. They came to loot our bounteous wealth but later stayed on to establish their empires.

In the eighteenth century the fabulous wealth and magnificent palaces of Akbar and Shah Jahan in the north were destroyed. The great Marhata Kingdom of Shivaji, the famous Vijayanagar Kingdom of Krishnadevaraya and finally the Mysore Kingdom of the valient Tippu Sultan, all from south were laid low by the Portugese, the French and the British armies.

In a war might becomes right. The army with superior-weapons wins. The stoneage tribals lost their battle with those who came with bows and arrows. The Indian armies fought with bows and arrows for centuries. The British came with their guns and explosives and over-powered the Indians. The Americans won the last war by being the first to discover the Atombomb. People of a nation suffer defeat or victory not always according to the justice of their

cause. Violence has always bred more violence. All the great teachers of mankind like Buddha, Christ, Muhammed, Zoroaster and Mahaveer have taught people to be nonviolent and not wage wars. But Kings and rulers have not listened. It was our Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi who courageously came out with a new idea. He taught the world as to how we can settle disputes peacefully. The aggressor and the victim will both benefit by it.

The war between India and England during the present century that brought us freedom was unique in Hisotry. Both the victor and the vanquished parted as friends and remain so even today.

But it was not only the aggression of invaders that forced us to poverty slavery and degradation. Our own sins in society and inter-communal rivalry brought us down. We must analyse the mistakes we committed and wrongs that we have perpetrated on our fellowmen. We betrayed the great teachings of ancient teachers and lost our country to the curse of a foreign domination. In the name of religion we hated each other and joined the invader to defeat and humiliate our own brothers. We treated a large section of our own kith and kin as untouchables. We destroyed the common bondage that we belonged to one India and became narrow minded. The innumerable small kingdoms ruled by petty chieftains suppressed their subjects and exploited them for their own glory. The class of priests and money - lenders joined hands with any invaders for selfish ends. Knowledge and learning became the monopoly of a few upper classes and a vast majority of our countrymen remained illiterate.

Soon after Aurangazeb died in 1707, the country broke-up into pieces. The Marhattas, the Sikhs and the Bengalese occupied large tracts of territories. In 1739 Nadirshaw looted Delhi and carried away famous Kohinoor diamond of the Moghul Emperors and the precious peacock throne along with enormous wealth. Again and again the fabulous riches of the ruling Indian Princes and Nawabs were plundered and taken away to foreign countries.

The Portugese, the Dutch and the French came to India and entered into trading agreements. They began to build marketing cities to collect and transport to their countries the wealth produced in lacs and lacs of Indian villages. Slowly the rich people

of India also joined them and sold away all national interests. Europe began to grow wealthy at the cost of India's teeming millions.

The British East India company landed on the West Coast and established a trading centre at Surat on the Gulf of Cambay in 1612. The then Moghul emperor, Jahangir Shaw entered into an agreement with the British company for a ransom. Slowly the East India Company began to expand. They drove out the Dutch who had arrived earlier. They founded Madras city in 1639 and built the Fort Saint George. They entered Calcutta in 1651 under a trade agreement and also acquired Bombay from the portugese in 1661. They entered into another agreement with Shivaji in 1674 and finally established a permanent settlement in Calcutta in 1690. The French arrived in 1675 and became rivals to the British. The Government of England sent its army to help the East India company to occupy India and establish its empire.

In 1773 the private firm called East India company became a semi official agency of the British Government. By 1758 the rich resources of Bengal had passed on into the hands of the British after the great battle of Plassey in 1757. Sirajuddoula was overthrown and Mir Jaffer the ignominious traitor became "Colonel Robert Clive's Jackal". Plassey sealed the fate of India. One by one the valiant kings and Nawabs who fought against the British and French fell victims to well trained troops led by foriegn generals. The Rajput principalities, the Mahratta Kingdom, the Nizam of Hyderabad and lastly the great and valient Tippu Sultan of Mysore fell victims to the treachery and conspiracies of the foreign army generals. The French troops also lost to the British who were better organised and had more powerful arms.

Having established a trading empire backed by a powerful army and navy, the governors, the generals, the councillors made enormous fortunes. The wealth was drained off to Britain. The Indian bankers and money-lenders also surrendered to the British. They became agents to buy goods and commodities from the Indian peasants cheaply and make it over to their masters on commission. It is said that Robert Clive returned to England at the age of thirtyfour with a fortune of more than £ 40,000 a year and a sum of £ 50,000 for his relatives. The servants of the company

made their own fortunes. British historians Mill and Wilson in their History of British India, themselves remark:

"The vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a series of the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that ever was known in any age or country" (Quoted by Tarachand. History of Freedom Movement in India Vol X page 275.)

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly describes in his Discovery of India that even though Indian society was far in advance of the British in its culture and knowledge, it has stagnated for long to catch up with the Industrial revolution of the West and progress in the modern world. He remarks "every civilization which resists growth and change declines". In England too there were two different cultures. One of Milton's and Shakespeare's and another of a ruling class who were ruthless colonialists. Nehru bemoans that the English people who dominated in India came from the later and encouraged a wrong India destroying the urge for freedom and equality amongst the educated classes.

It is curious to note that just at the time when India was loosing her freedom America declared its independence from Britain in 1776. The declaration of American Independence was a landmark that put America on a road to rapid progress. In France a great revolution smashed the king and the old order of feudalism to declare the rights of man to the world. Liberty Equality and fraternity were the thundering messages of the french revolution at this time. But England remained conservative and built an empire denying all rights to its colonies. More than one third of the world in Asia, Africa and Latin America became slaves to either England or other European powers. The pride of England was that the "Sun never sets on the British Empire" because it had spread all around the world.

The plunder of India helped also the Industrial revolution in England. Before the eighteenth century all over the world the main occupation of people was agriculture. The main source of energy was animal power. In India the Cow was the source of power. It gave bullocks for ploughing, for transport and many other kinds of physical work. The village Industries were all run by manual and

mechanical power using both human hands and animal power. In England it was the horse that added strength to human hands. In the middle east it was the camel and for the Eskimos it was the dog. For more than five thousand years man built up succeeding civilizations on this basis. Nevertheless India gave to the world the first mathematicians, the first astronomers, the first chemists, doctors, engineers and other scientists. All knowledge was used for the upliftment of man in society. Moral and spiritual development in India gave a supreme value for good life. All great founders of religions emerged from this culture as beacon lights of ideals for living. All this ancient greatness began to flounder at the advent of a dehumanising Industrial civilization that first started in England and Germany, in the first half of the eighteenth century.

In 1760 the flying shuttle and the spinning jenny appeared in England. The power from coal and steam were subjugated for industrial use. Watt developed the steam engine in 1768. Industrial techniques made great strides in manufacturing cloth. The well known Indian textile Industry that gave the famous 'Dacca Muslin' to the world began to collapse in the face of an unequal competition from the power looms of England. The weavers of Bengal were exterminated by brute force and raw cotton for the spinning mills of England was exported from this country. Slowly the whole of India became an agricultural colony of Industrial England supplying raw materials at the cheapest and buying industrial goods at the costliest prices. The village artisans were being liquidated under a commercialised dictatorial foreign regime.

Man's blind faith in the power of the machine and rapid acquisition of wealth by European nations spelled utter ruin to the rural based civilization of India. As stated earlier there were poets and philosophers in England who foresaw a growth of destructive forces that will destroy the right to work, wealth and happiness for a vast majority of people.

Oliver Goldsmith in his poem 'the deserted village' warned England when she was at the threshold of great industrial prosperity, thus:

"..... Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey where
wealth accumulates and men decay....."

..... Trade's unfeeling train usurp the land and disposes
the swain.....

..... A bold peasantry a country 's pride when once
destroyed can never be supplied....."

Let us come back to the history of British domination in the 18th and 19th centuries over the whole of India. The East India company finally merged into the British administration in India. The Parliament of England took over the exercise of supreme authority. Lord Cornwallis was appointed the first Governor General of India in 1786. All Indian administrators became subordinates. The rajas and maharajahs were reduced to a state of subjugation. The armies were commanded entirely by English generals and commanders. The Indian sepoy became a paid servant to defend England against his own country.

Alongside traders the Christian missionaries came to India from the 17th century onwards. They built churches and schools to convert people to Christianity. All Europeans were Christians. To spread their religion the missionaries carried on a tirade against Hindus and Muslims alike. They misled the illiterate masses and forcibly converted the poor and the down-trodden. The British government backed them and gave them large tracts of land, enormous money and police protection. The great traditions of India were denigrated. The Christian civilization of the West was extolled as superior to all others. The first Christian missions landed at the southern tip of India in Kerala in the 17th century. They rapidly spread out to all parts of the country. This cultural conquest enslaved the minds of the new generation of Indians who came under the influence of the English masters. The English educated servants of the administration began to look down upon India as backward, ignorant and uncivilized. They became willing tools to oppress the vast masses of Indians and made them feel inferior and helpless against the white man's arrogant tyranny.

There were also a few evangelists who came with devotion for service. They became well versed in the languages of India, started printing presses and news papers, taught English and studied deeply the ancient literature of India. Hospitals, schools and churches were built as composite units. Every city and town in India was

covered by the missionaries. Large sums of money came from Europe to help in their propagation of Christianity. The three major religious groups the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians came to be separated from each other though all of them were sons and daughters of the same motherland. The British constantly set one group against the other in politics. This policy of 'divide and rule' demoralised the people of India to a large extent.

In the field of education ancient sanskrit learning and the medieval persian scholarship that had developed through several centuries were pushed to the background. Lord Macaulay in his minutes on education for India recommended a system of English learning in 1835. The system was meant to obtain educated officers, clerks and servants to serve in the administrative offices of the British government. Colleges under the English professors were started in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. Indian graduates were employed as government servants to strictly carryout the orders and legislative measures of the British authority in India. The Indian civil service was entirely British.

Inspite of all these chains of slavery that was so rapidly spread over India, the Indian village community resisted change and kept an identity of its own. But both political and economic forces let loose by imperialist England slowly ravaged it. Poverty, unemployment and dependence on money lenders dominated the village community and broke it up. Even after a hundred years after the British invaded India, the village community was fighting hard to survive on its own self-contained economy. In 1830 Sir Charles Metcafe one of the ablest British officials in India described these village communities thus:

"The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of village communities each one forming a separate little state in itself....is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence"

- (quoted by Nehru in *Discovery of India* Page 357)

By 1850 all the revolts that had erupted against the British were suppressed by military force. While some upper class selfservers betrayed the country the common patriotic people of India did not easily surrender to the foreign domination. The soldiers who once served the moghal and rajput kings, the farmers who were dispossessed, the sadhus and sanyasis who were against slavery rose in revolt in many parts of the country. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who gave us the patriotic song of "Vande Matharam" has described the Sanyasi revolt from 1763 to 1800. The Zamindars and peasants of Bihar fought battles in 1766 and in 1816. The tribal people of Orissa and Eastern India tried to drive away the British from Rangpur and Dinajpur in 1783. The Birbhum riots in 1799, the revolts in Orissa in 1804-17 and in Sambalpur (1827-40) were led by landlords and farmers. In south India the Raja of Vijayanagar rose in revolt and the pategars of Tamilnadu resisted the foreign invaders from 1790 to 1794. The people of Malabar and those of Andhra refused to surrender in the early part of the nineteenth century. Diwan Veluthambi of Travancore organised a major battle of the people against the rulers in 1805. The ryots of Mysore rose in revolt in 1830-31 and people of Kurnool in Andhra in 1846-47.

In the Western part of India there were similar wars of resistance in Sourashtra in 1832, in Gujarat by the Kolis till 1849, in Maharashtra by the Bhils (1818 to 1831). In Karnataka Rani Channamma of Kittor in 1824 and the Gadkaris of Sathara in 1841 gave battle to occupying forces of the British army. In the north armed revolts of former soldiers in Haryana and Utter Pradesh were numerous. The more important ones were of Aligarh talukdars (1814-17) of Bundels of Jabhalpur (1842) of Khandesh (1852), and the great battle in Punjab in 1848-49.

We thus see that while outwardly the major ruling classes of India were completely defeated and they surrendered their territories, the common people of India were patriotic enough to resist foreign rule for over half of a century. Unfortunately they were all scattered and disjointed revolts by natives of small regions which were overwhelmed by superior armed military units of the British. It was in those days that cantonments of British troops were built up in as many as forty major towns and cities spread over the whole length and breadth of India. More than that the treacherous mutual rivalries of the small kings and pategars who were never united

against the British to defend the country as a whole, brought in the tragedy of total surrender. The suppressed fire of patriotism and the humiliation of slavery could not however be extinguished altogether by the armed forces. Mother India's march to freedom was again revived by the first war of Independence in 1857.

CHAPTER - III

The First Upsurge of 1857

It was the centenary year of the battle of Plassey in Bengal fought in 1757. It had heralded the shameful surrender of India to the treachery of Robert Clive. One hundred years of the rule of the East India Company had devastated the length and breadth of India. Patriotic Indians were fuming with anger and agony. The spirit of India was burning to burst out against the usurpers of an ancient vast country. War, conquest and plunder had reduced the people to abject misery and frustration.

In 1848 Lord Dalhousie was appointed as Governor General of India by the British government. The East India Company and its rich traders were sheltered under the imperialist Government of India. The ambition of the British was to bring the whole of India under colonial rule and make all Indians subjects of the British Empire. The great Marhatta statesmen and warriors who had almost dissolved the Moghul empire were eliminated. Nana Farnavis, the Peshwa Baji Rao I, Madhavji Scindia of Gwalior, Yeshwant Rao Holkar and that remarkable woman, princess Ahalya Bai of Indore had all passed away. The British had begun to overthrow longstanding dynasties and usurp major princely States. They began installing puppet kings under the command of British residents and army units. The whole of north India had come under their sway.

But yet they did not have victories all their way. The British armies had lost in the first Afghan war in 1838-42. They were defeated by the Sikhs in Punjab in several encounters in 1845-49 and they had lost in the Crimean war (1854). The East India Company had built up a large army in India by recruiting Indian

sepoys who were serving in several states. But no warrior was allowed to be a commander at any level. There were 40,000 British soldiers commanding over 360,00 sepoys. All the sepoys were paid mercenaries and were bound to serve as bonded labour under humiliating conditions. England was preparing to use these Indian sepoys in their wars in other parts of Asia and Africa. The Indian soldiers were reluctant to cross the seas or go out of India at the bidding of their masters. Their voice of protest was suppressed by ruthless punishment.

Lord Dalhousie had brought over sixty important Indian states under the sovereignty of the British government. Their armies and treasuries were no more under the complete command of the royal houses. A new regulation called 'doctrine of lapse' was promulgated by Dalhousie. Under this whenever a ruler died without a son or heir to the throne, sovereignty lapsed to the British power. Nobody could be appointed without the consent of the British crown. By 1854 powerful states like Sathara, Jaipur, Sambhalpur, Baghat Udaipur, Jhansi, and Nagpur had been subdued by this new doctrine. Prior to all these states the state of Oudh in Uttar Pradesh had come under British protectorate in 1801. Lord Wellesley had signed a treaty with Wajid Ali then Vazier of Oudh giving complete independence in internal affairs. Oudh had been the main recruiting area for the Bengal army of the East India Company.

The Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawab of Carnatic and the Raja of Tanjore in south India suffered the same humiliation. Even the last Moghul King at Delhi was sought to be disinherited by Dalhousie, but the court of directors who had entered into a treaty with Delhi kings overruled it. On the death of Baji Rao II the ex-peshwa, Dalhousie refused to continue the royal pension to his adopted son Nana Saheb.

These Chains of insults, humiliations and degradation of the proud royal houses roused a wave of bitter hatred against the foreigners. Most of these Nawabs and Kings were gallant warriors and courageous patriots. They had still armies of loyal soldiers and brave subjects at their command. There were no quick travel facilities in India then. Yet horse-riders and errand bearers moved about with great rapidity. Events of 1857 snowballed into a great rebellion of the combined forces all over north India against the

British sovereignty. Edward Thompson regards it "largely a real war of Independence".

The people in general were also facing new challenges of a foreign domination. The influence of the Christian civilization from the west was increasing. The dominant hindu society of India and devout muslim religionists who formed part of Indian natives, were both shaken by the christian missionary activities. Traditional Indian life with its own culture, learning and beliefs was being deliberately destroyed by the arrogant conquerors from England. On the economic side the ruin of Indian village industries had thrown out large sections of our people from gainful employment. Traders, money lenders, agents of foreign business houses had gained the upper hand. The timid richer merchants sucked the life- blood of the people and began to serve the exploiting East India company, who exported all rich commodities to their country. A new administrative class under the British emerged as tyrants. In the name of serving the people, roads, postal services, markets, private banks, land settlements were taken up so as to increase military, trade and missionary activities of the English rulers. People of India, the dispossessed kings and Indian army sepoys combined together and rose in rebellion to drive out the century old foreign invaders. They resorted to insurrection, war, terrorism and mass scale murders of the ruling elite. Those who served the British were called traitors and were attacked mercilessly. A widespread but disorganised revolt surged ferociously throughout the country.

The big cities of India like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Lucknow, Peshawar, had become strongholds of the British trade. Military garrisons around them were founded to protect them. Political expansion and subjugation of the entire nation became their primary objective. The coastal towns were built for shipping the wealth out of the country. Raw materials for the new factories of England and riches for investment began to be drained off from the nation. Guns, rifles, bayonets and gun power were imported and supplied to the occupying military forces. This established an unequal balance of aggressive power in favour of the British army. The Indian armies fought mostly on horseback with swords, bayonets, lances and other traditional weapons. One by one the Indian bastions began to fall in the face of sophisticated military arms and ammunitions.

The annexation of Oudh state in 1857 in controvention of the 1801 treaty, sparked off the great sepoy rebellion. At this moment the sepoys were equipped with rifles. The cartridges to these guns and rifles were greased with cow and pig fat. The sepoys had to bite the tapering end before filling it into the banet. Both hindus and muslims were enraged because of their strong religious sentiments regarding the cow and the pig. A wave of bitter hatred arose. Hindu and muslim sepoys defied their English commanders and joined the armies of the Indian princely states to rise in a massive revolt. Its aim was to throw out the foreign rule and restore power to the Emperor at Delhi.

The valcano of discontent errupted without a warning. It was a battle to regain a nation's lost honour. "Deen, Deen" and "Hara Hara Mahadev!" became war cries and filled the air. At the Barackpore military station Mangal pande of the Bengal infantry fired the first shot of the great revolt on March the 29th of 1857. It was a protest against use of cartridges covered with animal fat. The English were alarmed. They disbanded all suspects and hanged Mangal Pande on 8th April. This was the signal for the uprising.

On the 10th of May 1857 a strong contingent of Indian sepoys at Meerat rose in rebellion. They marched towards Delhi thirty six miles away. The whole population around backed them. Within 48 hours Delhi had fallen to rebels and they proclaimed the feeble old Bahadur Shaw 'Zafer', last of the Moghul dynasty as the emperor of India. The Meerat rebellion caught like wild fire. From Punjab in the north to the banks of Narmada in the South and from Rajasthan in the west to Bihar in the east the whole of north India was aflame. In Oudh alone more than hundred thousand men both military and civilian joined to strike down the British rule. They marched into Rohilkand and Bundelkhand killing and arresting British soldiers and supporters. The Moghuls, the Mahrattas and the Rajputs who fought for over a century amongst themselves before the British came, now joined hands in common cause. But by this time their strength and morale had been greatly reduced.

Moulvis and Fakirs, Pandits and sanyasins roamed about to spread the message of revolt far and wide. The Brahmins of the old

city of Benares came out to defend this ancient city of hindu sanctity against the domination of christian rulers.

After a month the English marched to Delhi defeating the first attack of rebels at Badli-ki-sarai on the outskirts on 10th June. The main Redfort of Delhi was formidable. The troops camped outside and waited for reinforcements. Punjab and Kashmir which were under British protection sent reinforcements. The Gurkha regiments loyal to the crown also joined them. English troops with tremendous power of men and ammunition again made a determined attack and siezed the city of Delhi after 134 days of bitter battle. Over 27,000 people were killed in this bloody confrontation. The palace of Bahadur Shaw was captured on 21 st of September 1857 and he along with his three sons surrendered near Humayun's Tomb. The English wrath fell on the three princes and they were shot dead in cold blood. After a mockery of a trial Bahadur Shaw was exited to Rangoon.

The sepoy at Kanpur besieged many military stations and rose in arms. Nana Saheb the last of the Peshwas led the revolt. He fought like a lion in a "wounded rage". Ruthless and savage attacks by the British were successfully defied for months. The Governor general Lord Canning ordered commander General Neil to march from Allahabad to Kanpur. He laid waste villages on the way and hanged hundreds of innocent suspects striking terror in the people. The horrible memory of the savagery lingered long in the memory of generations. At last Kanpur which was the capital of Oudh fell to British arms. Lord Canning had advised restraint and magnanimity at the hour of victory. He was softer than the avenging generals and saved more unnecessary killing.

Leaders of the upsurge like Nana Saheb, Kunwar Singh of Bihar, Azimullah, Wahabis of Patna, General Bakht Khan, Rango Bapuji became legendary heroes holding aloft the banner of insurrection and revolt. Each one of them were adored heroes of brave defence against a mighty enemy. The fight was between unequal sides. There was no coordinated and disciplined struggle on the part of Indians. Patriot after patriot sacrificed their lives at the altar of the motherland.

On the horizon of Indian history during 1857 the name of Rani

of Jhansi shines as an unforgettable flame of patriotism. Jhansi was a little kingdom in Madhya Bharath which was siezed by the British from the Peshwas in 1818. The right of succession to its rulers was guaranteed by a treaty. Gangadhar Rao who was also called Baba Saheb Nowalker, the Raja of Jhansi died in 1854, without a male child to succeed him. Seizing this opportunity Dalhousie annexed the territory and ignored the young widow of Baba Saheb, Rani Laxmibai. This remarkable lady had always thought that she and her kingdom should never surrender to the British. She was cast in the mould of courageous heroines. She patiently waited for three years and when the great revolt of 1857 sparked off she plunged into it like a lioness defending her own and her country's honour.

The Indian troops in Jhansi rallied round their queen. She quietly organised a rebellion against the British and overwhelmed the English generals Captain Dunlop and Captain Alexander on June 9th 1857. The flag of Swaraj, as she called it, proudly fluttered again on the fort of Jhansi after three years. The English were driven out. The eloquent tributes by a later historian from England, Malleson, speaks for the qualities of this picus, generous, gentle but brave queen that her people adored. He says:

"She proved herself a most Capable ruler..... she gained a great influence over the hearts of her people. It was this influence, this force of character added to a splendid and inspiring courage that enabled her, some months later, to offer war to the English troops under Sir Hugh Rose, which under a less able commander, might even have been successful" (Heroes who made History - V.B. Kulkarni).

In March 1858 the fortress of Jhansi was attacked by a huge British army of 20,000 men under the great commander Sir Hugh Rose. Rani of Jhansi braved the challenge with indomitable bravery of a trained patriotic soldier riding on horseback sword in hand and donning a male attire. Men and women cheerfully followed her to the bidding of their daring queen. In the face of a huge well equipped British army, the Rani's forces were reduced to desperate straits.

Another hero of the great rebellion of 1857 Tantia Topi who struck terror like Shivaji in the hearts of his enemies, marched with an army to help Rani Laxmibai. But Alas! forces against him were too formidable. He was defeated and driven back. The siege on Jhansi was tightened with renewed force. The garrison at the fortress began crumbling. The Rani's life was in danger. Without loosing heart Rani Laxmibai boldly sallied out of the fortress on horseback and squarely attacked the English soldiers. Accompanied by a small band of fighters she rode to Kalpi where she again joined Tantia Topi to give battle to the enemy relentlessly. At the battle of Keenchgaon her superb valour and brave attacks surpassed the great generals on the British side. She marched on to Gwalior fort to capture it. The Maharaja Scindia was reluctant to get involved against the powerful British army under Sir Hugh Rose. The garrison of Indian troops took the side of revolution and gave courage to Laxmibai. Gwalior became the last bastion of the great revolt. "I am ready" declared Rani Laxmi Bai "with all my heart and soul to do my duty". She drew out her gemstudded sword, rode her favourite steed and ordered her soldiers to march in the face of certain martyrdom. Determined not to surrender at any cost the Rani charged with fierce attacks dealing deadly blows on the enemy's troops. Sir Hugh Rose stood aghast. He brought reinforcements of a camel corps and made a powerful frontal attack that completely shattered the last defending line of Laxmibai. The faithful horse of hers rushed forward to swim across a stream to a place of safety. It stumbled and was overtaken by an enemy soldier, He mistook the Rani for a male and cut her to pieces. Thus on June 18, 1858 the legendary career of a warrior queen was extinguished. Songs and ballads for generations sang the glory of this heroine who fell a martyr in defence of her motherland. The indefatigable hero of guerilla warfare Tantya Topi and Baid Ferozeshaw could not be subdued till 1859. They fell victims to a treacherous betrayal. This marked the fall of the Indian fight back to regain freedom from the clutches of an alien rule. Queen Hazrat Mohal, widow of the king of Oudh in Lucknow, defied the English to the last and died as an exile in Nepal. By 1859 the Union Jack of England fluttered proudly over every part of India from Kashmir to Kerala and from Gujarat to Bengal.

The revolt of 1857 failed because:

- (1) The numerous small and independent states failed to forge an integrated nation to resist a foreign usurper.
- (2) Religion and caste had degenerated into rituals and fanaticism dividing the people against themselves.
- (3) Military aggression with more modern armaments could overpower outmoded bravery on the battle field, where might is always right.
- (4) There was only the burning patriotism of individuals without a clear new ideal put before the people to awaken a sustained moral backing essential for victory.

As the people of India buried their dead, Queen Victoria issued the great proclamation of November 1858 taking over the administration from the East India Company. The throne of England was ruling over a population of thirty crores from a distance of six thousand miles away. India surrendered to a tiny island of traders and wealth diggers.

More than six hundred princely states though restored to the heirs of their ruling dynasties, surrendered their sovereignty, their armies, their wealth and power to the British crown. A resident Englishman sat over their heads and dictated policies calculated to protect the interests of England. One third of India came directly under the British governors as British provinces. A crestfallen nation lay prostrate at the altar of the parliament of England. Queen Victoria of England took the title of Empress of India in 1877.

Ambition and conquest of India had made England the largest and the most powerful empire in the world. The white man looked down on all coloured races as inferior and took upon himself to 'Civilize' them. In 1888 Sir John Strachey wrote "It is clear that the only hope for India is the long continuance of the benevolent but strong government of Englishmen". Poet Rudyard Kipling coined the phrase "Whiteman's burden" meaning that it was the whiteman's sacred duty to govern and 'civilize' India.

The wheel of history rolled on. It took ninety more years for India to regain her own and shake off her shameful shackles.

CHAPTER - IV

The Soul of India Awakens

By the advent of British rule and the influx of a foreign culture India began to realise that centuries of stagnation and slavery had completely ruined her own ancient culture. New ideas were being suppressed by dogmas and superstitions. India came to be known as the land of only fabulously rich kings and snake charmers. Traditional institutions of religious bigotry and the rigid system of caste by birth made people extremely narrow minded. Social injustices were rampant. Large sections of our own kith and kin were kept ignorant, backward, poor and even rejected from society as untouchables. Inhuman practices like 'Sathie' and human and animal sacrifice to propitiate gods prevailed. Educated hindus and muslims were attracted towards the Christian way of life that came from the west. Taking this opportunity the Christian missionaries began to denigrate all aspects of India's ancient attainments. With the political surrender of our great country a process of cultural slavery began to mutilate our lives. English educated small groups or individuals, who bettered their lot as servers under foreign rule, became strangers in their own land. The white man used these Indian serfs to boost his image as one of superior race ordained to rule over us and spread his western ways of living. The inner and pulsating real soul of India which was buried under the debris of rust and decay was struggling to rise in its pristine purity.

The impact of a foreign domination also roused a spirit of introspection in the minds of spiritual and intellectual leaders of the 18th and 19th centuries. The rumblings of a great moral awakening from the depths of India's immortal spirit began to rise to the surface. The warrior's weapons of swords and guns could not match the indomitable moral force of the leaders of modern India's

great renaissance. It looked as if the Himalayas began to move with the ancient message of truth, love and freedom for mankind. The Ganges the symbol of an ever flowing culture of India, as Jawaharlal Nehru described it, began to flow with a new spirit of reform and rejuvenation. Bengal which was the first province to capitulate also gave birth to the first messengers of the new dawn.

Even before the great rebellion of 1857 that was subdued by superior military forces, the immortal spirit of moral revolt against cultural slavery rose with the prophetic genius of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was born before the battle of Plassey. This Raja who heralded the national march to an all embracing freedom, was born in Peadha Nagar in Hoogly District of Bengal.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born into a rich cultured family of scholars in hindu society. But soon he rejected the narrow confines of his traditional fold and studied Islamic, Buddhistic and Christian scriptures. Revolting against bigotry and superstition of his own people, Raja Ram Mohan Roy left home and travelled far and wide in the country and abroad, in search of knowledge. He learnt besides Bengali and Sanskrit, Persian, Hebrew, Greek, and English in early youth. He dived deep into the basic studies in Hindu religion and founded the Bramha Samaj in 1830. He campaigned ferociously against the inhuman practice of 'Sathee'. Social and religious reform of the Indian masses was his aim. He stood up against the English imperialists with dignity and self respect. The moral force of his personality compelled respect from the rulers. 'Sathee' was abolished by law. English education was opened to all, women of India who were scorned and neglected were given due honour and respect, Ram Mohan Roy wrote profusely in Bengali and English to educate his countrymen to a sense of national pride in their valuable heritage. He founded the first Bengali news-paper "Sambod Koumudi" and a persian weekly 'Miral UL Akbar' in 1822. He fought for the freedom of the press even in those early days of total repression. Raja Ram Mohan Roy died in Bristol, England in 1833. He is gratefully remembered as the father of the Indian renaissance.

A wave of new enlightenment began to stir young patriots and spiritual seekers. In the later part of the 19th century a galaxy of powerful reformers appeared all over India. Swami Dayanand

Saraswathi (1824-1891) was born in Punjab. He founded the Arya Samaj to restore hinduism to its vedic vitality. Modern knowledge he said should be absorbed and India should march forward to a society of equals, standing high in courage, freedom and dignity before the whole world. Then came Iswarachandra Vidyasagar and Keshab Chandra Sen from Bengal, Mahadev Govind Ranade from Bombay giving clarion calls for rejuvenation of the Indian society. In Tamilnadu the great saint Ramalinga Vallalar (1823-1874) heralded the great revolt against caste discriminations. Mahatma Phule in Maharashtra and Sri. Narayan Guru in Kerala became powerful forces to raise hopes of a new future for the lowliest and the last in our society. A fresh and life - giving stream of awareness that slavery, not only political but social economic and cultural has to be removed, began to flow amongst the vast common populace.

Then came the great Paramahansa Ramakrishna to demonstrate the oneness of all religions. He was born in a village Kumarpukur in Bengal in 1836. He rose like a new blazing light on the Indian horizon lifting up the spirit of the Indian people to heights of glory. With no formal education nor knowledge of English Sri. Ramakrishna's innate power of intuition and devotion to God realisation in terms of a good life, became an inspiration to thousands of young educated Indians. He died in 1886. The greatest of his disciples young Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) in less than forty years triumphed over the whole world with his message of "awake arise and stop not till the goal is reached". His appeal was to make India strong and sweep out the despicable slavery of the nation.

Speaking about Swami Vivekananda, Jawaharlal Nehru says in his discovery of India, "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to... India's problems and was a kind of a bridge between the past of India and her present..... He was a fine figure of a man, imposing, full of poise and dignity, sure of himself and his mission and at the same time full of a dynamic and fiery energy and a passion to push India forward. He came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralised Hindu mind and gave it self reliance and courage".

"Religion is the manifestation of divinity already in man".
"Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man" were the great sayings of Vivekananda. He was

the first sanyasi to go to America. He addressed the parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. In that famous speech he made the west realise that India can teach the world the way of self-realisation and dynamic spiritual action to lift mankind to a nobler civilization. Romain Rolland, the Nobel laureate of France who was greatly influenced by Indian thought wrote glowingly about Sri.Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Tagore, as great messiah's of mankind. Swami Vivekananda wrote in 1898 thus:

"I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedantha and Islam together".

(Quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru)

Apart from the stir of new ideas amongst the vast mass of educated Hindus, there were powerful new social reformers amongst Muslims, Parsis, Christians and others. They were all rooted in Indian soil and never thought that they are alien to our culture and heritage. Persian scholars from Lucknow, Allahabad and Delhi founded educational institutions. Sir Syed Ahmed, Hakim Ajmal Khan and others roused the spirit of self-respect and an urge for freedom amongst their followers. The Parsis of Bombay who had adopted India as their motherland forged a great movement for self-determination. Dada Bhai Navaroji, Phiroze Shaw Mehta, Madame Cama became great fountains of national regeneration. Amongst Christians W.C. Bannerjee, Principal Rudra, C.F. Andrews, worked incessantly with a moral fervour to integrate all Indians in an effort to emancipate the great nation from the ignominy and shame of slavery.

One of the most remarkable Irish woman who made India her foster motherland was Mrs. Annie Besant, founder of the Theosophical Society in India. She settled down in Madras - Born in 1847 in Ireland and greatly influenced by Madame Blavatsky prophet of theosophy in England, Annie Besant came to India along with a few European disciples and settled down in Adyar near Madras. She studied deeply the Hindu scriptures. The Bhagavadgita influenced her greatly and she translated the whole text to English.

She travelled to the great seats of Hindu learning in Varanasi, Haridwar, Kashmir and Bengal. Her soul felt a great kinship with Indian philosophy and way of life. She became the champion of the Home Rule Movement and joined Lokamanya Tilak in the early phase of our freedom struggle. She died in 1933 and left a great legacy of inspired moral leadership. Many educational institutions with a national outlook were started under her leadership including the Benares Hindu University of Varanasi.

The Bhagavadgitha more than any other sacred literature of India influenced the lives and thoughts of great National leaders of India. Political action was also seen as a moral duty in leading a life based on truth, love and brotherhood amongst all mankind. Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, Lokamanya Tilak, Annie Beasant and later Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba, Rajagopalachari and Radhakrishnan wrote learned commentaries on the Geetha which are well-known. These great works were as much responsible to awaken the younger generations and prepare them for a fight for freedom as all other political literature did.

The soul of India lives by its spiritual strength. The great heritage of saints and seers which was dormant for centuries arose with a new glow of enlightenment. This new age saw other great seers who blended modern thought with ancient knowledge to give India a new philosophy which has to flower out in the lives of the common people. Shri Aurobindo, Sri. Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramatheerth, Swami Ramdas, Saibaba of Shirdi, Ravi Shankar Maharaj were some of the most respected modern saints who were adored and followed by large masses of common people. They made Indians love their own motherland and work for its emancipation.

It was not only the awakened religious fervour but also a vital resurgence of new literature in all Indian languages, new industrial endeavour and new scientific progress and research that kindled hope in the nation's march to liberty.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Vande Matharam' a poem in his great novel Ananda Math became the national song of India. Poet Ghalib the celebrated urdu poet wrote popular poetry. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee rose to fame as a novelist Subramanya Bharati and

Mohammed Iqbal depicted patriotic themes as inspired poets in Tamil and Hindustani respectively. All regional languages in India began to flower with a new energy. The impact of English literature had modernising and healthy effect in this growth.

Amongst the pioneers in industry and commerce were Parsis, Gujaratis and Bengalis in the forefront. Jamshedji Tata, Ambalal Sarabhai and the Singhanias inspite of British opposition started manufacturing Industries in India. Bombay Calcutta and Madras emerged as centres of economic power in which Indians began to rise as equals to foreigners.

Scientists of Inter-national fame such as Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Sir Profulla Chandra Roy, Sir.C.V.Raman, blazed a challenging path for science in India. Sir M. Visweswaraiah, a great Engineer and Statesman of Karnataka became the pioneer in planned economic growth for India's self-sufficiency. All these personalities kindled a spirit of self-confidence and rapid progress towards a modern India. Indians demonstrated that they could hold their heads high in the new field of science and technology as well. India was ready for breaking its chains.

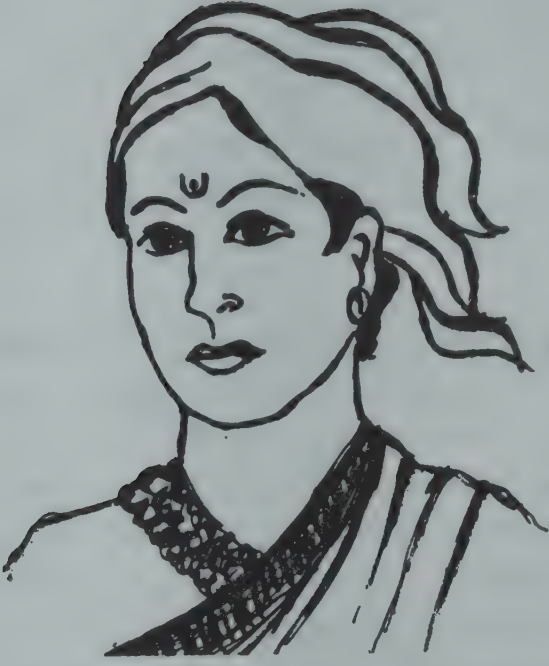
Two outstanding personalities that influenced the course of reawakening the potent forces of India's head and heart were Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Mahathma Gandhi. They were adored both by the political leaders as well as spiritual seekers. Tagore was the poet of humanism and freedom. He founded the famous Shantinikethan near Calcutta in 1910. His poetry revolutionised Bengali literature and vitalised the dynamism of India's struggle. Gitanjali a collection of Tagore's outpouring to the universal spirit of God was translated to English. It drew the attention of the entire world and won him the Nobel prize for literature. In that collection of poems he inspired his countrymen towards the goal of "that heaven of freedom" where the mind is without fear and the head is held high" (the full text of this poem is in the appendix). In 1911 Tagore sang the glory of mother India in the Song "Janagana Mana". This has now become the national song of Independent India.

In his wanderings around the world Tagore upheld the indestructible soul force which burns bright in man and reigns over the

destiny of mankind. The vulgarity of a brute civilization based on materialist prosperity of the western society cannot be the ideal for us said Tagore. He pointed out a path of simple life in tune with God's beautiful nature to realise truth, good and beauty (Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram) in a world society of cultured human beings. India should be free to again become a true path finder for the emancipation of the world from the thralldom of a dehumanised civilization, was Tagore's mission.

The massacre at Jalian Walla Baug in 1919 touched Tagore so deeply that he lost faith in the English rulers. He condemned the firing and renounced the knighthood awarded by the British crown. Writing to the Government of India, he said "The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I, for my part, wish to stand shorn of all special distinction by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings". At that hour of national tragedy the country rose as one man to challenge British authority and demanded freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Both Tagore and Gandhi, though they were working in different fields joined together to inspire the nation for a "do or die" mission to liberate the motherland. "They seemed to represent different but harmonious aspects of India and so compliment one another" remarks Pandit Jawaharlal, who was a close disciple of both of them.

Thus we see a great and powerful flood of recovery of India's inner strength by the life and message of these immortal souls that illumined our history in the later 19th and the first half of the 20th century. At no time in any country's history we see so many of such men and women of prophetic vision and such spiritual greatness born within a short span of half a century. This was the backdrop for the final phase of our struggle for freedom which blazed an unique and uncharted path of nonviolence and truth. There was no instance in history where a struggle ended with such warmth and regard between the victorious and the vanquished nations. This was a moral equivalent of bloody wars that the world is pining for. Mahatma Gandhi showed the way of Sathyagraha to achieve this. We shall hear about this part of the history of our struggle for freedom in the following chapters.



Zansi Rani Lakshmibai



Vinayak Damodar Savarkar



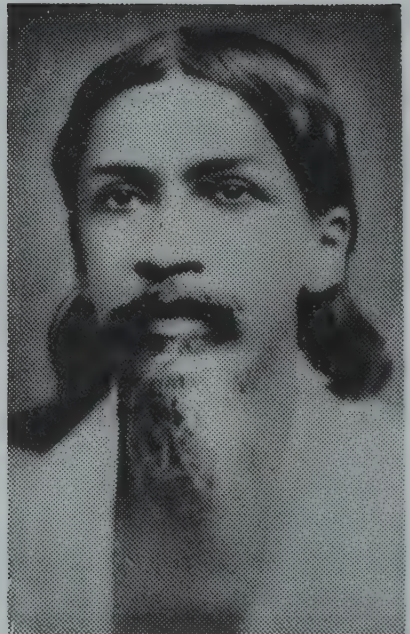
Lokamanya Balagangadhar Tilak



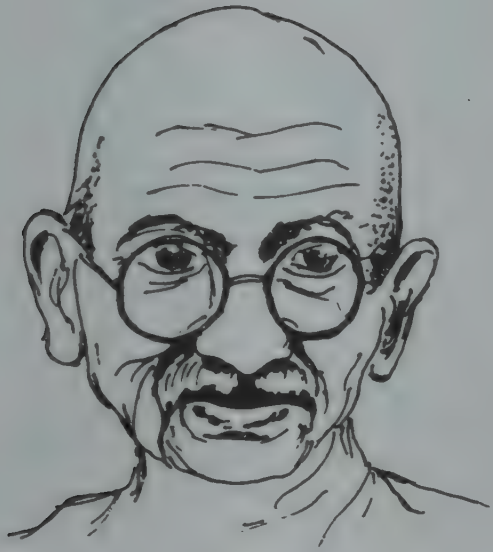
Annie Besant



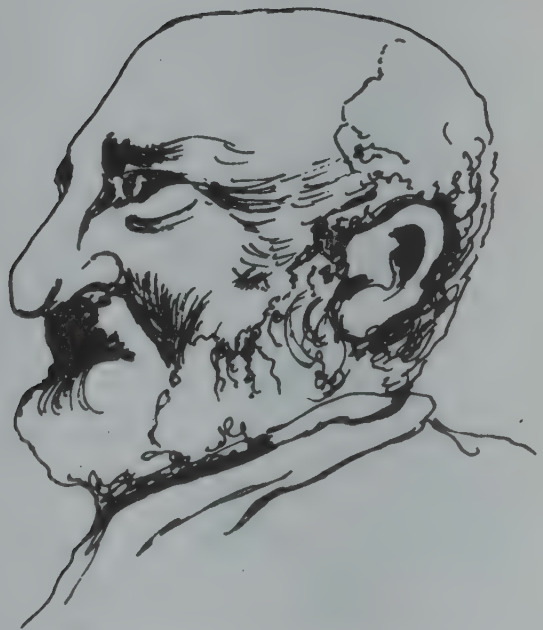
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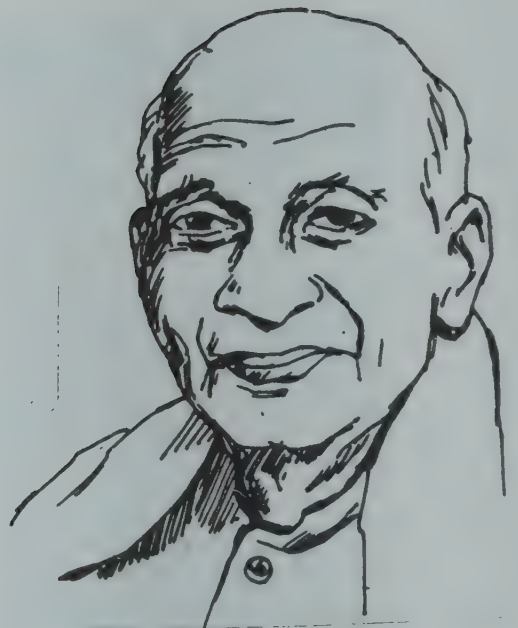
Mahatma Gandhi



Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan



Jawaharlal Nehru



Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel



Subhashchandra Bose



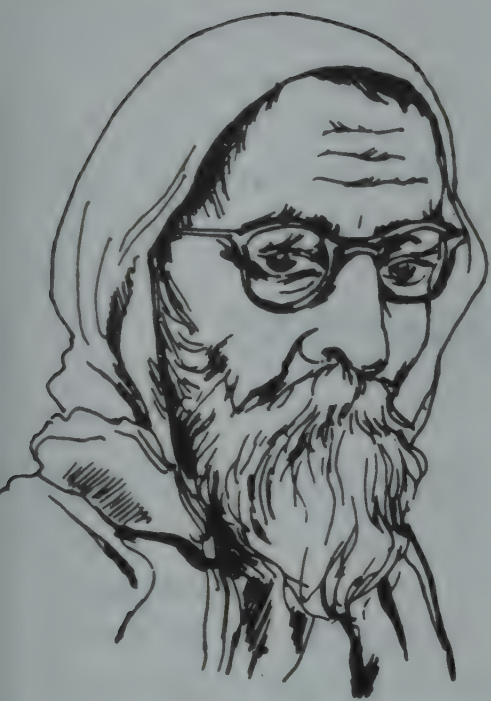
Bhagat Singh



Sarojini Naidu



Moulana Azzad



Vinoba Bhave



Jayaprakash Narain

CHAPTER - V

Period of Helplessness

For three decades after the suppression of the 1857 revolt, India groped in the dark. A new era of national struggle to free herself from the foreign yoke was yet to dawn. The economic condition of the people lay prostrate at the throne of British authority. The Zamindars became agents of foreign exploitation. Laws were enacted to protect these sections against the vast common people and the farmers in villages and towns. Rumblings of restlessness and kindling of a new wave of patriotic fervour became evident amongst newly educated youth in India. After the revolt of 1857, the British were afraid not so much of the princes and sepoys as of the angry common people.

A period of ruthless suppression of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association followed. The contrast between England where these freedoms were guaranteed by law and India where such political freedom was outlawed became glaring to those who were English educated. Raising armed revolts or militant rebellions was impossible in the situation. The whole nation was disarmed by law and nobody could carry even a gun without a licence. Therefore constitutional and democratic methods of protest had to be organised by enlightened Indians on behalf of the people.

Slowly associations of Indians to demand political and economic reforms began to rise. The British Indian Association was started in 1851 in Calcutta. Madras and Bombay also became centres of organisation. The Bengal British India Society. The Kalyan Unnayak Mandal of Poona, the Bombay Association, the Indian languages newspapers were all founded in later years.

All of them while accepting to be loyal to the British, began petitioning for Indian participation in the governance of India. There was the large area of semi feudal administration in the six hundred princely states under Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs and Nizams. They covered more than half the population of India. This indirect rule of the British ensured a "double slavery" of the subjects of the native states as Jawaharlal Nehru termed it later.

Mahatma Gandhi remarks in his autobiography that in 1901 when he visited Calcutta to attend the session of the Indian National Congress, he also saw how in the durbar of Lord Curzon these Rajas and Maharajas were treated as slaves.

"I was distressed to see the Maharajas bedecked with necklaces, bracelets, laced turbans and besides all this, swords with golden hilts hanging from their waist bands.....I discovered that these were insignias not of their royalty but of their slavery.....They wore them only at such durbars under the British paramountcy". Seeing all this drama Gandhiji writes with a heavy heart "How heavy is the toll of sins and wrongs that wealth, power and prestige exact from man!" (Gandhiji's auto-biography P.174).

Coming back to the last quarter of the 19th century we notice that it was the area of British provinces ruled directly by them, that saw a resurgence of an outburst of patriotism upholding the self respect and dignity of the Indian people. A great stride towards a new national movement was initiated by the emergence of a large number of newspapers and journals both in English and Indian languages. But the British government did not relish strong criticisms in the press. It came down heavily on those who wrote boldly to educate the people on the wrongs done by the foreign rulers. The more important journals that fought for the rights of the people were "Khandesh Waibhav" The 'Shivaji' and Maharashtra Mitra of Poona, 'Swathanthra', Amrith Bazar Patrika and Yuganthar of Calcutta. The Hindu, Kesari and pioneer came a little later on the scene. "New India" of Chandrapal, 'Kohinoor' of Lahore and other journals preaching a people's movement became very popular.

Lord Lytton came as viceroy and ruled between 1876-80. He passed the vernacular press Act of 1878. All news papers published in Indian languages came under strict censorship of Government officials. 'Vernacular' was a contemptuous term for native languages. Writings criticizing the British rule were labelled as 'seditious' under the act and the paper that published them used to be banned. Strangely this act exempted English newspapers. Amrith Bazar patrika and few other journals quickly started English editions to circumvent this act. This act was later repealed by Lord Ripon (1880-84).

It was at this time that the Zamindars of North India became tyrannical agents of the Government to extract revenue from the farmers. The illfamed "permanent settlement" brought to force by Lord Cornwallis had given recognition to the right of the landlord over the peasant to collect any amount of revenue that he thought fit. The traditional cultivator who owned the land he tilled was reduced to the position of a tenant. The village money - lender became a tyrant with legal protection. The peasant became a labourer with no legal rights either on his land nor on the produce.

The English usurper of valuable cultivated land began to force large sections of farmers to grow commercial crops like Indigo, Tobacco, tea, spices etc. The growers had to surrender all such produce to their landlords who were mostly English or their Indian agents. In Bengal and Bihar which had come entirely under British control, Indigo plantations increased under compulsion. Food crops which were the main sustaining produce on land began to dwindle. Money and exchange economy in favour of planters and Zamindars began to grow. The brave old economically independent Indian villager became a victim to foreign exploitation of his labour. Exploiters were protected by the new laws and the new British courts. Army and police often terrorised the farmers to total submission by force. This tyranny was too much to bear. Around 1860 the farmers rose in revolt and refused to grow Indigo in their lands. In Bengal it affected a large number of districts. The peasants stood firm and submitted memoranda to governments, they sought protection by filing law suits against planters. They refused to obey orders of local tyrants and began to organise themselves into strong groups for self defence. The educated Indians of the upper

classes began to realise the injustices perpetrated on their less fortunate brethren in villages. They supported their cause and guided them in their struggle. Bengali news papers gave support. "The Hindu patriot", under Harishchandra Mukherjee in Bengal wrote in glowing terms the heroism of ryots in defence of justice. The planters had to yield finally and the government had to concede the right of the cultivator to decide what he should grow. This gave an impetus to uprisings of farmers in tribal areas..... The santhals protested against usurpation of their lands.

In 1873 an organisation of farmers was formed in Patna district of Bihar to fight against the despotism of Zamindars over the village people. A slow awareness of their legal rights and the power of collective constitutional action began to dawn on the rural horizon. In 1885 the Bengal government enacted new tenancy laws in stricken areas coming to terms with these uprisings.

In Maharashtra the peasants of Ahmednagar district rose to protest against the Ryotwari system in 1875. Apart from these recorded large uprisings there were a number of small but significant movements in many parts of India for asserting the rights of the cultivators and local landholders. But the strong arm of law under the British rule successfully suppressed these growing discontents. The newly english educated servants of administration sided with the established government and became potent instruments in enforcing law. Loyalty to their masters gained an upper hand than justice to their own countrymen.

The Indian press took courage and began to expose this high handed suppression of the aspirations of helpless peasants. In 1875-78 the patriotic fervour of editors of popular news papers like Khandesh Vaibhav, Kesari, Mharatta, the pioneer, Shivaji, Swatantrata Amrit Bazar Patrika etc began to whip up public sentiment against the foreign rulers. They roused people to stronger action. Oppressive taxes like the Salt tax, the licence tax, stamp duty and such others levied by Lord Lytton bled the nation to the bones. In January 1878 'Swatantrata' grew so caustic as to write "when the yoke of oppression is put on us as if we were helpless slaves, should we not become independent to gain our rights? How long shall we suffer this dependent condition? This state is ex-

tremely painful. We cannot endure it any more. Freedom or Swatantrata is the only mansion of success and happiness".

The country was seething with discontent. Several English administrators like Octavious Hume and William Wedderburn saw that a popular revolt was bound to happen. They warned their own government against ceaseless oppression. A forewarning came from liberal thinkers and scholars in India like Sri. Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dadabhai Navaraji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. They placed before the public facts and figures of foreign exploitation and misrule. Younger and patriotic people began to organise for an open revolt. One Vasudev Balwant Rao Phadke having been powerfully influenced by Ranade's lectures resigned from his military office and collected a group for an armed rebellion. They even committed crimes for collecting money for their arms. But Phadke was caught. He was sentenced to transportation for life for collecting arms and ammuntion "to wage a war against the British queen". He was sent to Aden where he died at the age of 38.

An educated middle class began to emerge in India. They acquired knowledge of what was happening in the world. The fight of the Irish people under Devalera against the British, the chinese struggle against Japan, the struggles of the people of Eurcpe for democratic rights inspired them. Literature on these struggles began to grow. In 1880 Surendranath Banerjee founded the Indian Association to fight the cause of Indian Ryots. Anand Mohan Bose, Dwarakanath Ganguli and others joined.

Between 1856-60 three universities were started in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. They were intended to produce loyal administrative staff for British offices. But this new education also made young graduates conscious of their slavery. Patriotism began to glow in their hearts. Many came out for public work and social service amongst the poor and the downtrodden.

Lord Lytton had also promulgated a law called Arms Act. Nobody could have a pistol or a gun without a licence. They were punishable with three years' imprisonment or fine or both. This compulsory disarmament of the people was intended to emasculate them. The whiteman who posessed lethal weapons became a

terror. No prince or Maharaja of an Indian state was permitted to have a private army in his state. Even bodyguards had to be screened by the British residents.

So the more mature political thinkers in India said that constitutional and peaceful action was the only way to get redress from this foreign Government. People in the big cities began to demand civic rights. Labourers began to form trade unions in urban and industrial areas. They began to demand better wages. Education began to spread. The land holders asked for new legislations for their protection. Law courts, schools, revenue offices, police and military cantonments sprang up all over the country. Indians were also taken at high administrative offices in the Civil services. The entire country came under one single political authority under the British viceroy.

CHAPTER - VI

Birth of Indian National Congress

"If amongst you, the university educated people, even fifty men cannot be found with sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if need be, devote their lives to the cause, there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers....". (Ram Gopal "How India struggled for freedom p.56).

This was written strangely, by an English friend of India Allen Octavian Hume, in 1884. He was writing to the graduates of Calcutta University. Hume was an officer in the Bengal civil service under the East India Company. He was a social reformer by disposition. He saw the miserable condition of India under British rule. He sympathised with Indians and criticized some policies of the British. He had to suffer for his views. He was suspended. It was not his intention to dethrone the British crown in India. But he wanted the British Government to be honest & just to the principles of Government of India laid down from time to time by the British parliament. He did not want a rebellion of the people. He went to England & explained the situation in India. He advised the members of parliament to take loyal Indians to confidence. He also pleaded for inclusion of more officials from India and trust them. Hume also thought of an Indian organisation to represent the grievances of the native people to the government and redress them.

In March 1885 he started the Indian National Union along with a few Indian friends. He called a Conference in Poona in December

1885 but later the venue was changed to Bombay. Hume changed the name of the union and called it "The Indian National Congress", 72 delegates from all over India were invited to the Conference in Bombay. Womesh Chandra Bannerjee of Calcutta was selected as president and A.O. Hume as general Secretary. Surendra Nath Bannerjee, Dadabhai Navaroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, G. Subramanya Iyer, Badruuddin Tayabji, Rahmutulla Sahani and Pheroze Shaw Mehta were some of the eminent Indians that supported the Congress. Along with Hume several Englishmen of high standing like Sir William Wedderburn, George Yule and Sir Charles Bradlaugh a member of parliament, helped the Indian National Congress to establish itself as a political organization in India. Thus the seed for a great revolutionary institution that ultimately achieved freedom for India, was sown in 1885. A.O. Hume wanted only to defuse the hatred growing in India against the British and save the empire. But the tide of nationalism slowly converted the Congress as the biggest and strongest forum for a struggle against the British.

At about the same time several organisations taking interest in public affairs sprang up in the country. Madras Mahajana Sabha (1884), Bombay presidency Association (1885), the National League were a few. But they were all overshadowed by the National Congress. As years rolled on it became a people's organisation. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis joined the Congress making it a truly democratic National Institution. All eyes turned towards the annual congress sessions held regularly in important cities of the country.

But still the Congress was a petitioning body submitting memoranda to the foreign government. It remained loyal to the empire and pleaded for redress of people's difficulties by the government. The viceroy or the governors received the leaders and used to receive the memoranda with condescension. No word that went against the government used to be tolerated. After the sessions in the early years, there used to be garden parties arranged by the viceroy in honour of Indian delegates to the Congress.

Even this status for an independent public body like the Congress was not tolerated by the imperial government. Lord

Curzon remarked in 1900 that it was his great 'ambition to assist the Congress to a peaceful demise' (Freedom movement in India - Nayantara Sehgal p.47). But his calculations were upset by the growing spirit of nationalism under great leaders like Lokamanya Tilak, Lalalajpathrai, Bepinchandra Pal and Gopalakrishna Gokhale. From year to year the Congress grew stronger and popular.

Sri. Badruddin Tayabji a young judge of Bombay presided over the 3rd Congress in 1887. The muslims of India had begun to give their full support to the wave of patriotic nationalism. After 1857 the British rulers had taken steps to suppress the muslim chieftans and army-men since they were the descendents of former rulers of India for several centuries before the British came. The hindu rulers of small states, hindu religious leaders and educated hindus were encouraged and supported so as to contain the muslim ambition to usurp power from the British hands. This process was gradually reversed when Congress began to grow in popularity. The muslims were trusted as friends of the British and hindus were spited. Several english-educated muslim leaders were honoured and were elevated to high posts of dignity by the Government of India. They were asked to publicise amongst their co-religionists that they are safe only under the British. The majority community of hindus were painted as enemies who would destroy all other religionists if the British withdrew from India. A man of the stature of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan formed an association called united Indian patriotic association in 1886-87. It campaigned against the Congress and said that it is working to 'preserve peace' in India by supporting and strengthening British rule. By a new policy of encouraging the hindu, muslim and Christian religious traditional institutions and setting them one against the other, the British tried to make themselves indispensable in India.

Mr. George Yule a merchant of Calcutta, presided over the Allahabad session of the Congress in 1889. He pleaded for greater autonomy in organising Indian trade and commerce. Surendranath Bannerjee went to England and formed the British unit of the National congress in 1890. During the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1889 the Government of India banned the participation of any Government servant in the deliberations of the Congress. The earlier hospitality of governors and viceroys was also stopped. Only the richer classes of India and english-educated leaders of

society were left to support and provide resources to this National organisation. The membership of this body was also greatly confined to these upper classes. They continued to be loyal to the British crown but protested against the economic drain from India, to Britain in various ways.

- Facts and figures of enormous profits made by British vested interests and the burden of taxes levied on Indians began to be reflected from Congress platforms. The Indian public were made aware of how they are being cheated to sell raw materials at cheap prices and import enormous manufactured consumer goods at exorbitant prices. People in India were beginning to understand how all indigenous Industries were systematically ruined. How poverty had crept over the large masses engaged in agriculture. How all forests and plantations in India had become total monopolies of the British. Gradually a campaign for the swadeshi spirit to withhold support to English manufacturers began to rise.

As early as in 1891 in the Madras session of the Congress Murlidhar a delegate from Punjab warned his countrymen thus "You are content to join these accursed monsters in fattening themselves on the blood of your brethren...look around ! What are all these european made clothes, chains, hats, and all the luxurious fittings of your houses but trophies of India's misery, mementoes of India's starvation!... you have robbed your poorer brothers, honest handicraftsmen who can no longer earn their living. Free trade is a shame'. - (How India struggled for freedom-Ram Gopal p.72.)

Later in 1892 at Lahore the grand old man of India Dada Bhai Navaroji was elected president of the Congress. Young stalwart nationalists of the day like Madan Mohan Malviya, Sri.G. Subramanya Iyer, Gokhale and others adorned the sessions. Again the commercial exploitation from England was exposed in clear terms. Malaviya anguishly asked "where are our weavers? Where are those millions of indigenous manufacturers? Wherever you go British made goods, cloth, machinery and traders stare at your face! All profits of production have been robbed. How can this country be happy?". (Annie Beasant How India fought for freedom p.42.)

Even the great Irishman Alfred Webb who presided over the Congress in 1894 eloquently charged the British empire on the

most irrational levy of taxes in India and showed how enormous Indian money is being spent abroad for the benefit of Europeans. In ten years from 1881 to 1891 this drain rose from 17 millions to 110 million pounds, which was a big chunk of the wealth produced by the sweat of honest and poor Indians. These facts were put before the people and a clear antagonism against the Government which protected these indirect methods of impoverishing the Indian to pay the high class society of England to rise.

As a strong public opinion was being crystalised against the autocratic rule, the British parliament announced the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Indian members were elected to the imperial council. Dada Bhai Navaroji who was a member of British parliament himself, exposed the hallowness of this act. The council had no powers to question in financial matters, in military expenditure nor in excesses of the home department. But yet a few eminent Indians were elected to these councils.

G. Subramanya Iyer of Madras was jailed in 1883 for his caustic criticism in public about the looting of gold from Kolar Gold fields to the tune of over 200 million rupees by John Taylor and company of England. Official resentment was evident even against the moderates like Gokhale and Ranade. The demand to hold the Indian Civil service examinations in India was rejected. The appeals, petitions and requests of the annual sessions of the Congress were contemptuously ignored. Great Indians were arrogantly insulted and humiliated to curb the growth of Independent nationalism. The movement had no impact on British rulers.

In the meanwhile between 1885 and 1905 there was an extensive growth of national news papers both in English and in regional languages. They built up a strong national awareness by courageous propaganda amongst the reading public of India. These news papers became primary instruments of agitation under the editorships of prominent national leaders. Amrith Bazar Patrika, the Indian mirror, Sanjeevini, Bengalee were some of the papers from Calcutta, Andhra Patrika, Kerala Pathrika and Hindu of Madras from south India, 'Advocate', Hindustani, Kesari and Mharatta from Uttar Pradesh and Bombay and in Punjab Tribune, Akhabar-E-Am, Kohinoor were some of the most prominent national newspapers.

Compelled by forced unemployment and poverty, the Indian workers became indentured labourers in British colonies. There were large numbers employed as cheap labour. They were denied all rights of citizenship and self respect. They worked in mines, plantations, factories and shops owned by the British. Indian national leaders took up their cause to demand ordinary civil rights to those Indians settled in South-Africa, Malaya, Mauritius, Fiji, West Indies and British guiana. We can recall the great efforts of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa from 1893-1914 to win the cause of Asiatic settlers through his nonviolent Satyagraha. C.F. Andrews, P.Kodanda Rao and others worked in Fiji and Malaya. Gopalakrishna Gokhale took up their cause and persuaded the British Government to demand justice from the colonial governments of these colonies. The Indian National Congress also worked to persuade the British to concede the rights of Indians abroad.

CHAPTER - VII

Swaraj is Our Birth Right

The mild protests and soft demands of the founders of the National Congress had no impact on the powerful British authorities. By 1895 the people of India had grown impatient for a strong movement for self-rule. Lokamanya Balagangadhar Tilak emerged as an inspiring leader putting courage into the hearts of Indian patriots. He became the prophet of a fiery new nationalism. "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it", he declared. Tilak was born in 1856. He grew up as a great scholar and patriot. Gokhale and Tilak were two outstanding leaders in Poona. They both entered politics and stoutly opposed the tyranny of British rule. Gokhale was a moderate. He founded the "Servants of India Society" organising the Youth of India for dedicated and selfless service to the nation and to serve the suffering downtrodden people. The Sarvajanika Sabha of Maharashtra founded by Justice Ranade later came under the leadership of Tilak. These organisations took up intensive relief work in the famine stricken areas. The calousness of British officials in ignoring the sufferings of the people was severely criticized. Later in 1897 plague broke out in Poona and Tilak went to the succour of his people with a band of volunteers. They had to fight hard with the government to organise medical relief and nursing for the poor. Tilak wrote scathingly against the authorities in his papers Kesari and Mahratta.

During the period of acute famine Tilak asked the people not to pay the land tax to the Government. This campaign became strong and the common people became fearless. The wrath of the British came down heavily on Tilak and he was arrested on July 27, 1897. This was the first arrest of such an eminent Indian leader. The whole of India was stirred to the core. Tilak

became a Lokamanya - an adored leader in the cause of freedom.

The Congress met in Calcutta in 1896 and decided to take the aggressive path of openly opposing the rule of the foreign power. Lal Mohan Ghosh declared that the Congress will no more go to the government with petitions for small concessions. It would demand more and more powers to Indians to manage their own affairs. The frontrank leaders of the day Lala Lajpath Roy of Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal of Bengal began organising the people for a peaceful struggle of defiance against the British rulers. This great trio became famous as "Lal-Bal-Pal" and they awakened the common people to collective action against the injustices perpetrated by the rulers.

Tilak was tried and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment. The court charged him with seeking to overthrow the government and exciting feelings of disaffection amongst the citizens. He was released after one year. Tilak and his followers were called extremists. The other group led by Gokhale, Phiroze Shaw Mehta and others were moderates. The country was more behind the extremists because Britishers were growing rude and callous towards the people as if they were born to rule. The humiliation of slavery was keenly felt by educated younger patriots and they began to turn violent. They wanted to resort to direct action against British officials and terrorise them to leave this country. But the wiser elder leaders were aware that the armed forces of the government were quite strong to suppress any such revolt or rebellion.

Lokamanya Tilak began to rouse people to peaceful and constitutional agitation to win their legitimate rights as honourable citizens of this country. He popularised the Ganesha festival and Shivaji festival to educate people for collective action against social and political injustice. A tremendous wave of nationalism began to rise.

In Bengal Aurobindo Ghosh became the younger hero of the nationalist movement. Born in 1872 Aurobindo came from an aristocratic highly cultured family of Calcutta. He was brought up and educated in England from his very childhood. His father who

was highly westernised under the British influence wanted his children to be away from Indian traditions and learn to be anglicised babu's of the British civil service. But the genius of Aurobindo rebelled against the western imperialist culture. At the age of twentyone when he landed back on the soil of his motherland, Aurobindo who was a brilliant scholar in England turned out to be one of the greatest forces in the fight for Indian freedom. He was a great admirer of Tilak and joined him in rousing the dormant spirit of mother India to rise up and destroy all chains of slavery imposed by the western colonial empire. Aurobindo conveyed his passionate patriotism in his poetic expression in the Bengali journal "Bande Mataram" thus:

"The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunks and branches",.....(Freedom movement in India, Nayanatara Shegal P.48.)

Aurobindo was the best example of how English education had cut away a sensitive boy of innate native consciousness from the culture of the land and how potent forces in him flowered as soon as he was soaked in India's ageold wisdom and culture.

Aurobindo had joined Baroda state service under a Maharaja having refused to join the imperial civil service. He soon gave it up and joined Bipin Chandra Pal in Calcutta. He started the famous paper "Yugantar" and wrote fiery articles in Bengali and english inspiring the youth to rise and shakeoff the foreign yoke. His deep study of sanskrit literature and ancient scriptures of India enabled him to rise to great spiritual heights. His first concern was India's freedom. Therefore he sacrificed everything and joined the great struggle.

National awakening was rising fast from 1895 to 1900. The rule of Lord Curzon as Viceroy was a period of ruthless oppression. He looked down on India and Indian nationalists with contempt and indifference. He once declared".....If we lost India, I maintain that

our Sun would sink to its setting".(Durga Das: India, from Curzon to Nehru p. 45.)

Bengal at that time was the largest province and the central seat of the British Indian Government. It was administrated directly by the Viceroy. Calcutta was the official capital of India. Similarly it was Bengal and its leaders that played the most powerful role in organising anti-british agitation. Highly educated upper classes in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab who were against British rule joined hands to awaken the whole of India. Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa were one large unit of peoples' action for self assertion. The eminent intellectual Bengalis starting from Raja Ram Mohan Roy down to Bankim Chandra, the family of Tagores, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo preached the message of freedom and moral courage to strive to seek freedom and to fight for a resurgent India. One hundred years of British rule was being shaken by this moral awakening. Hindus, muslims and sikhs united to foster the national unity with which they opposed foriegn rulers. Therefore the British thought that Bengal should be divided into two parts one with muslim majority and another hindu. They took the side of muslims and told them that hindus will destroy them if the English rulers left. This move in 1896-97 sparked off an upsurge of powerful agitation.

In 1874 Assam was separated from Bengal. In 1897 Chithagong Dacca and Mymensingh were sought to be separated from western districts. In 1903 there was a talk of administrative divisions by the government of Bengal. Finally in 1905 the scheme of partition of Bengal was announced by Lord Curzon. A new province of East Bengal was proposed to be created. Bengali speaking people were divided and the sentiments of the people were aroused to a pitch as never before. The anti-partition agitation was made a national issue. Curzon tried to wean the muslim community to his side by offering more concessions for them as they were backward in education and economic conditions. In 1905 Curzon was called back by the new liberal government of England. Moreley became the Secretary of State for India. But the partition move was not withdrawn. A massive movement began in Bengal and was followed by agitations all over India. Tilak became the hero of the struggle. He preached boycott of British goods and started the Swadeshi movement to strike a blow on British manufacturers for whose benefit India was subjugated.

In 1905 the Congress met at Varanasi with Gokhale as its President. He observed "Bengal's heroic stand against oppression of a harsh and uncontrolled bureaucracy has gratified and astonished all India. It has drawn closer all leaders of the country without distinction of caste or creed in offering resistance to a common wrong". But there was no programme of popular action against this wrong by this prestigious national body. So Tilak, Surendranath Bannerjee, Tarakram Gangaram of Arya Samaj, Aurobindo and Tagore took up the cause and initiated a powerful widespread Swadeshi movement. Big crowds formed processions of protest singing 'Bande Mataram' and condemning the Government. Young boys took up the banners of slogans in open defiance. British made articles were burnt. Foreign cloth was put on bonfires. News papers printed news of these agitations on bold lines. The heavy hand of the police came down to suppress the movement. Minto the new Viceroy was as ruthless as ever. Lathi charges, arrests, deportations, firings on demonstrators spread all over the country. In Bengal it was most severe. Responsible people were charged with sedition and insulted in courts.

Tilak gave the lead and the press in entire Maharashtra took up the cause of Swadeshi and boycott. Muslims also joined in large numbers. Allah-O-Akbar and 'Bande Mataram' became war cries of the movement.

Swadeshi mills were started to replace cloth from Manchester. Sir P.C. Roy started the Bengal chemicals. The Tata Iron and steel works was founded. Nationalism, National education, National dress and National agitations for Swaraj became the order of the day.

The British were surprised at this new peaceful unarmed revolt of the people.

Bepin Chandra Pal kindled a new fire of patriotic zeal by his lectures and tours. Lajpat Rai in Punjab led huge processions and defied the prohibitory orders of the Viceroy. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai of Madras led the movement for Swadeshi in Tamilnadu. He was a bold campaigner against foreign rule. He started a Swadeshi steam navigation company in 1902. Subramanya Bharathi the great poet of Tamil gave inspiring songs of patriotism and sang the glory

of Mother India. His songs moved millions of people to join the freedom movement. The Bards of Bengal from Tagore to Mukundlal composed songs and wrote plays and novels depicting the grim struggle that echoed in the hearts of hundreds of young men and young women of India. Thus a stage was set to openly defy the authority of foreign rulers. India was ready to move forward.

When all these protests failed to stop partition of Bengal the angry youth of Bengal began violent attacks on British officials. Terrorism began to rise. The so-called extremist leader Tilak was held responsible though he condemned this mad violence.

Tilak wrote strongly and advised the youth to restrain themselves from senseless murders. At the same time he condemned the stifling oppression by the authorities. The nationalist news papers were gagged. Presses were ordered to be closed. Many editors were prosecuted and jailed. Lala Lajpathrai was arrested and deported to Burma for six months. Bepin Chandra Pal was jailed for his fiery speeches. And finally Bal Gangadhar Tilak was arrested on June 24th 1908. He was tried for sedition for supporting the terrorists by praising their patriotism. Justice Dewar sentenced Tilak to six years rigorous imprisonment. He was deported to Mandalay Jail in Burma. Tilak held his head high during the trial and defended the honour of his motherland..He asked the British why they deny that freedom of expression which their countrymen in England enjoy as a right. On the judgement of the Indian court he remarked "There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things, and it may be the will of providence that the cause which I represented may prosper more by my suffering than by my being free". He rebuked the foreign rulers saying "the whole of India itself is a big prison. We are all prisoners. Going to jail is to shift from a big prison room to a smaller one". (Ramgopal - Bal Gangadhar Tilak).

The sentence on Tilak aroused the bitterest feelings in the entire nation. Hundreds of youngmen and women were enraged. They vowed to seek revenge. Many of them became violent revolutionaries and began secret groups to plot murders of British officials all over India. In Bombay thousands of labourers struck work for six days. They clashed with the police. Sixteen people lost their lives in police firing. In Bengal Aurobindo and his group began

terrorist activities in Dacca and Chittigong. Punjab was in flames against the British.

Thus began a period of the cult of violence and the emotional upsurge of young revolutionaries both in India and abroad. We shall know about them in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

The Cauldron of Violence

When Tilak was first arrested in 1897 for his campaign against British officers for their callousness, two maharatta youngmen were so enraged that they shot down two English officers W.C. Rand and Ayrest in Poona. Famine and plague had brought misery on the people and the arrogant tyranny of these Englishmen had added insult to injury. These young brothers were Damodar Chapekar and Hari Chapekar. These two teenagers were sentenced to death and hanged in 1898-1899. They ascended the gallows with the name of God on their lips and 'Victory to mother land' was their last wish. This martyrdom made them heroes. More and more brave young people later began resorting to the cult of the bomb.

In 1906 the Congress was clearly divided between extremists and moderates. Lord Minto became the Viceroy in the same year. He furthered the same oppressive rule. Officials became more rude and ruthless against those who criticized the government. The Calcutta session of the Congress was presided over by the grand old man of India Dadabhai Navaroji. The extremists led by Tilak and Aurobindo led a strong group who demanded positive action by the Congress to organise a movement of the people. They were not satisfied with mere petitioning. Dadabhai declared for the first time that the goal of the Congress is Swaraj, but counselled against strong public campaigning and violence. Later when the Congress met at Surat the situation in the country had worsened. Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh the president elect had to face a stronger opposition from the extremists. The session ended in confusion. The extremists went ahead with their programme of boycott of British goods, promotion of Swadeshi, picketing of liquor shops and organising volunteer corps. The British government resorted to collection of

excise revenue over liquor and had opened licenced shops. The drink revenue was abhorred by the leaders since it was ruining the lives of lacs of labourers and the downtrodden to fill the coffers of the government.

1907 heralded the fiftieth year of the great rebellion of 1857. Indian sentiment was roused and the failure of that struggle made them sore at heart. The younger generation attempted to revive the same spirit of revolt. Aurobindo's 'Yuganthar' preached insurrection and provoked armed revolt. 'Revolution is the only salvation for an enslaved society. With a firm resolve you can bring English rule to an end in a single day. Dedicate your lives as an offering at the temple of liberty. Without bloodshed the motherland cannot be freed'. (Ramgopal, How India struggled for freedom P.180). In Punjab thousands of pamphlets were distributed by fakirs and sadhus of Arya Samaj calling for a revolt. The native army in rawalpindi recieved appeals to overthrow the foreign rule by repeating the 1857 struggle. Lahore, Amritsar and Ferozepur were simmering with agitation groups. The Sikhs were voicing the nation's unrest. The government began to suspect everybody in a fit of fear of a second 1857. People slowly became fearless and offered to support the martyrs. During this period again the more awakened people of Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra took the lead. Numerous patriotic journals were started in local languages to inspire people to action. Secret societies to uproot the government were formed. The trickling news of similar revolts in Russia, Italy, Ireland etc., were being carried to the doors of the people.

Brilliant young educated persons like Mahendranath Roy (M.N.Roy) left India to join the communist revolutionaries of Russia who were in exile. In London, Vishnu Damodar Savarkar (V.D.Savarkar) started the free India society. Madame Cama, a young parsee lady went to Germany and unfurled a flag of Indian Independence at the International Socialist Congress in 1907 at Struttgart. She was the first secretary to Dada Bai Navaroji. Her impassioned speech on this occassion came as a torrent of patriotic thunder. Indian patriots were thrilled and rushed to offer their lives in defence of this new flag. Madame cama proclaimed "Behold ! this flag of Indian Independence is born ! It is already sanctified by the blood of martyred Indian youth. Lovers of freedom rise and solute this flag ! Co-operate in freeing one fifth of the human race!".

Others who later made great sacrifices in the cause of freedom of India, became recruits to the association called "Abhinav Bharath". Senapathi Bapat, Madanlal Dhingra, Ravi Shankar Shukla, Sikandar Hyath Khan, Bhai Paramanand, Gyanchand Verma were some of them. The society began producing revolutionary literature which were secretly despatched to India in thousands. The know-how of manufacturing bombs, hand grenades, explosives etc., was being stealthily distributed. Cyclostyling machines, printing equipments and gadgets for propaganda were being despatched. Revolvers, rifles, Gun powder and bullets were gathered by resorting to secret looting from military depots.

Shyamji Krishna Verma of Punjab, a scholar and Patriot left India in 1879 at the age of 22. After graduating from Cambridge he served in Indian princely states of Ratlam, Udaipur and Junagadh as Diwan. He was influenced by Lokamanya Tilak and left service to do political work in London. He started the India House and edited a paper "the Indian sociologist". He recruited young Indians abroad for revolutionary work in India and organised secret groups on the Russian model. In 1907 he migrated to Paris and lived there till his death. Krishna Verma became a legendary figure in rousing the spirit of Indian youth to drive out the British from India. He bequeathed his all for the struggle. He offered scholarships to Indian students desiring to study in Europe. Veer Savarkar was one such scholar who came under the influence of Shyamji Krishna Varma.

In India violent attacks on British officials increased. Senapathi Bapat, Hemachandra Das and Motilal Varma came to India with copies of Bomb manual. Bengal became the hotbed of secret societies. The largest group was "The Anushilan Samithi" (Society for promotion of Indian culture). This was started by Birendra Kumar Ghosh the younger brother of Aurobindo in 1902. In 1907- the group moved to Dacca. At one time there were 500 branches in villages of Bengal. The national school of Dacca under its teachers Das and Bhupendra Chandra Ray was the training ground for revolutionaries. Members of this group worked in Assam, Bihar, Punjab and united provinces.

In October 1907 they plotted to blow up the train in which the lieutenant Governor of Bengal was travelling. In December they

tried again near Midnapore where the Bomb exploded. In 1908 a bomb was thrown into the house of the mayor of Chandranagur. To crown all these adventures of angry youth, two young Bengali boys Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Choksi threw a bomb at the carriage of the district judge named Kingsford at Muzafferpur. But the bomb killed only the wife and child of another Englishman Pringle Kennedy. The bomb throwers were caught and arrested. Choksi shot himself, Khudiram Bose was tried and sentenced to death. He was hanged. The news spread like wildfire and the martyrdom of Khudiram inflamed the whole country. This case unearthed the hidings of many secret plot makers. They were all caught and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Birendra Ghosh, the brain behind the conspiracies was caught. Alongwith his two associates Ullasker Dutt and Upendranath Bannerjee, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. This case became famous as Alipore Bomb-case. Aurobindo Ghosh was also brought into it by the prosecution and sentenced. All the other accused in the case were very young boys. Birendranath was 18 years, Narendranath Bakshi was also 18. Bibhuthi Bhushan Sirkar 20 and Dutt 22. These young patriots were all either jailed for life or hanged. Dutt and Bose the heroes of the battle were hanged. When their bodies were cremated thousands of people lined up the road to Kalighat and paid homage. Thousands over the rest of the country were moved to tears. The lives of these champions of freedom aroused an unprecedented spirit of revolt and hatred against the English rule in India. But the violent rebellions that those boys resorted to were too feeble against the mighty armed forces of the Empire.

The ferment of unrest however continued to grow. Those who braved violent attacks on high officials were becoming martyrs. Ras Behari Bose and Sachin Sanyal attempted to kill the Viceroy. They threw a bomb at him while he was riding an elephant. He was only hurt. Gosh and Sanyal were imprisoned for life. Madanlal Dingra shot and killed an English official in the India office in London in 1909. He was sentenced to death. Gandhiji who was in London said that the burning patriotism of Dingra was un-impeachable, but he warned that the way of violence and hatred will never succeed.

V.V. Subramanya Iyer of Madras was a leader training terrorists in Madras. Vanchi Alayar, another associate of Savarkar shot a

British collector in 1911 and later shot himself. Jathindranath Mukherjee of Bengal was another fiery rebel who was caught and killed by the police. These daring acts failed but the bravery of these young patriots became inspiring legends in India.

The Cult of the bomb and terrorist action continued till 1918. During the first world war these militant nationalists wanted to beat the British by helping their enemy nation Germany. But the more mature and senior leaders counselled patience. Gokhale and Gandhi were actually helping the government in the hope that after the war Home rule will be granted. Another powerful movement for Indian freedom was started in Canada and United States by the Punjabi settlers in those countries. This was known as the 'Ghadar movement'. It was led by Lala Hardayal of Delhi who went abroad in 1905 to complete his education in Oxford. He gave up the scholarship given to him by the British government and returned to India and became a revolutionery young leader at Lahore in 1908. In 1911 he went to Sanfransisco in United States and organised associations sworn to destroy the British rule in India. Over five thousand youngmen and women in America and Canada mostly sikhs who had settled down in these countries joined him. A journal by name 'Ghadar Party'. In Hindi, Punjabi and Gurumukhi was started. Lala Hardyal was a brilliant scholar and an extrordinary organiser. He travelled far and wide, met Indians in free countries outside India to whip up enthusiasm for a powerful action to free their motherland. A branch of the 'Ghadar party' was started by Prof. Barkatulla in Japan. He was prosecuted and sent out of the country. He joined Hardayal in the United states. There were groups of the Ghadar party working in Vancouver, Shanghai, Hongkong, Malaya, China, Phillipines, Fiji and Argentina. They kept in close touch with the revolutioneries in India. Sent trained volunteers to form secret societies for a violent revolt. They hatched plots to either assassinate British officials or drive them out of India. In 1914 when war broke out Hardayal escaped arrest in America and went to Switzerland. He wanted to organise support to Germany and defeat the British so that India can declare her independence. A group of 350 sikhs and few muslims sailed from Hongkong in a Japanese ship "Comagata Maru" to Canada. They were refused permission to land. They sailed to India to raise a powerful revolt to uproot the British. When they arrived in Calcutta the British

authorities compelled them to go back to their hometowns in Punjab. Several of them were arrested. Over 800 Indians from abroad arrived in India to support them. They were all either taken to custody or interned in their villages mostly in Punjab. Rash Behari Bose the fiery revolutionery of Bengal came over to Amritsar to lead the movement. As the war was declared the emergency laws were extremely stringent. Even talking against the government action would invite imprisonment. A date was fixed for a simultaneous uprising against the British. But the secret police found out the plot and arrested over two hundred leaders of the Gadhar party. Bose escaped arrest. 42 young leaders were hanged. Others were imprisoned. The movement fizzled out in Punjab.

Kabul became the centre for those who escaped out of India. The rebels set up a provisional Indian government with the idea of taking over if the British are thrown out. Raja Mahendra Pratap was nominated as President. Lala Hardayal and Barkatulla gave support. They went to Germany in 1915 and canvassed support for an Indian rebellion. Jithendranath Lahori came to India and arranged contact between Bengal revolutionaries and the Germans. Large supplies of arms ammunition and guidance came from the german based revolutionaries. But there was no well-knit organisation in India. The British were too powerful for them. The daring attacks of small groups on British military bases were foiled. Hundreds of rebels were caught and hanged under marshal laws. This gallant movement was completely destroyed. But yet waves of intense urge for freedom and a great interest in the freedom movement became part of public life in India. The march towards Swaraj had taken a great stride.

The most spectacular chapter of this revolutionery upheaval was the work of the great patriot Vinayak Damodar Savarkar better known as Veer Savarkar and his brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar. They started Mitra Mela in Maharashtra and gathered brave young rebels around them in 1908-15. Vinayak was in London and Ganesh was working in India. He printed and distributed pamphlets and papers to educate people about the impending revolution. Anti-British feelings were being roused. Stories of Russian and Irish revolutions were being broadcast. Preaching war against the government and raising revolt groups secretly were the primary objectives of Mitra Mela. Ganesh Savarkar was arrested for these

activities and sentenced to transportation for life. The elder brother V.D. Savarkar was the fountainhead of terrorist activities in London. He sent literature and arms secretly to the rebels in Maharashtra. In 1909 December the rebels shot dead the district Magistrate of Nasik Mr. Jackson. The Government was alarmed. Police let loose a terrific search to round up every person whom they suspected to be an associate of Savarkar. The case became famous as 'the Nasik conspiracy case.' Vinayak Savarkar was branded as the leading spirit behind the conspiracy. His books such as "The Indian war of Independence 1857". Life of Mazini were proscribed in India. An arrest warrant was sent to London to be enforced by the board of secret police court. Savarkar was then in Paris. On arrival at London he was taken to custody under the fugitive offenders Act charging him as a conspirator against His majesty's government and his sovereignty over India. He was ordered to be sent back to India. As the ship carrying him came near Morseilles, Savarkar jumped into the sea and swam across to France. But he was persued by the steamer guards and caught. The French government protested since it was against International law to arrest him on their soil. It was ignored. Savarkar was brought to India, tried and sentenced to transportation for life. He was sent to Andamans for imprisonment. Even from jail Savarkar dared to produce seditious literature and sent them to India. He was punished again and again. He was sentenced to six months' solitary confinement, seven days' on handcufs and was subjected to inhuman treatment. Yet the spirit of this patriot could never be vanquished.

The story of these daring adventures of Savarkar inspired hundreds of young revolutionaries in India. But with the loss of leadership the revolts were easily liquidated by the superior military forces of the British in India. The war years from 1914 to 1918 saw ruthless suppression of all patriotic movements in India demanding self-respect and autonomy in all fields of public life.

The cauldron of violence and the martyrdom of young patriots slowly came to an end. It demonstrated how in a violent struggle might becomes right. The legends of the heroes that sacrificed their lives at the alter of mother India became fountains of a new inspiration for the people. As Mrs. Annie Beasant described it "their names are held sacred and are crowned with triumph". India faced the war years in agony and hope. England came out with a promise

of reforms after the war was over. Thousands of Indian soldiers fought the war for England in countries abroad. Indian leaders supported the cause of Britain against Germany. The resources of India were lavishly spent on the war efforts. Poor India looked on. The chains of slavery were heavy on her. But the spirit soared high. The people of India were pining for a new leadership on the freedom front. The horizon was dark. A simmering light was beginning to appear. The future story of a grim battle began in right earnest.

CHAPTER - IX

Shattered Hopes

It was 1914. The Indian national congress met in the United provinces. Sir S.P.Sinha was the President. He was loyal to the British and asked only for responsible posts in the British Indian government services. But the members demanded effective control of administration through legislative councils. They agreed however to be within his Majesty the King Emperor's government. The governor of the province also attended the Congress. A formal welcome was accorded to him.

Lokamanya Tilak who was released in 1914 from Mandalay jail was also present at this congress. But the moderates prevented his re-entry into the congress. Gokhale and Ferozeshaw Mehta opposed the extremist views of Tilak. But it was the great english woman Annie Beasant who pleaded for the entry of the extremists. But she failed.

Annie Beasant was born in 1875 in Ireland. She was attracted to Indian culture and its ancient scriptures. When Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophical society Annie Beasant became her associate. She arrived in India in 1893 and founded the world centre for Theosophy at Adyar in Madras. It became Internationally famous and attracted great scholars and philosophers from all over the world. Upto 1914 Annie Beasant worked entirely for the revival of religious values and social transformation. The slavery of India annoyed her and she joined the nationalist movement. She brought-out a daily paper 'New India' to educate the people. Later she founded the 'Homerule movement' along with Lokamanya Tilak when the congress refused the entry of extremists who were led by Tilak.

The Home rule league was started in 1916. One section in Poona was under Tilak's leadership and the other in Madras. Annie Beasant was the President. The object of the League was 'to attain Home rule or self-government within the British empire by all democratic means'. It began educating the people to work for it. Joseph Baptista a barrister became its president at Poona. N.C. Kelkar and others joined the League.

The Home rule league did not oppose the congress. The members organised propagation of the idea of Swaraj and prepare the people to agitate for it. This was similar to the 'Sin fein' movement of Ireland against England under the leadership of D'Valera. Tilak and Annie Beasant toured extensively in different parts of India. Their public meetings attracted large crowds. Home Rule Movement became a powerful wave in the country. People contributed liberally for its fund of one lakh of rupees collected by Tilak. The remarkable personal influence of Annie Beasant in Madras brought in thousands of students, scholars and public men into the movement. G.S. Arundale, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Barrister Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru were among the prominent supporters. Tilak's Sixtieth birthday in 1916 became a national event. The whole country came to respect him as the great national leader. The books which he wrote when in jail at Mandalay for 6 years, 'Gita Rahasya' and 'The Arctic Home of Vedas' were published.

The Bombay government again issued a notice of prosecution to Tilak for his speeches and writings. An appeal was filed in Bombay High Court against the order of the magistrate who demanded a bond of over 50,000 Rs. from Tilak. Mohammed Ali Jinnah defended Tilak. The High Court cancelled the magisterial order. This was a great victory for freedom of expression. Gandhiji also hailed it in his 'Young India'.

A Home Rule league was also established in London in 1916. G.S. Arundale and C.Jinaraja Dasa who both headed the Theosophical Society later, were active in London for the league. Miss Esther Prite, Countess dela Wen, George Lansbury were in the executive. They published a pamphlet "What India wants?" pleading the case for Indian Home Rule. Since the war was said to be to defend democracy, they asked why India has been denied the

right to self-rule. The British Government was embarrassed at this question.

In 1916 the congress at Lucknow welcomed back the members of the Home rule League with open arms. They had made the movement for Swaraj more popular than ever before. People were anxious to march forward to collective action. Dynamic leadership was emerging under Tilak and Annie Beasant. The president elect of the congress Ambika Charan Muzumdar expressed happiness at the coming together of old patriots and friends in the common cause. Several moderates who disapproved direct action by the people left the congress. It was again in this session that there was a happy union between the Muslim league and the Congress. Annie Beasant and Tilak had brought them together.

But the rulers in India resorted to heavy repression again. Annie Beasant and her associates G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia were prohibited from all public activities including writing and publishing their views. In 1917 they were interned in Ootacamund, a hill station in Madras presidency. The whole country rose as one to condemn this arrogant order. Sir Subramanya Iyer, a former judge of the High court renounced his knighthood in protest. Similarly Tilak was ordered not to enter Punjab. So were the muslim leaders treated like wise. Moulana Azad, Moulana Mohammed Ali were detained without trial. Hundreds of their followers were held.

With all these happenings the Home rule movement gathered more and more momentum. Large number of students became the voluntary missionaries of the league. All Congress committees slowly moved towards the movement. The agitation grew stronger and drew the attention of political leaders abroad. To press the demand for Home Rule, Tilak suggested 'Sathyagraha' or passive resistance taking the clue from Gandhiji's struggle in South Africa. Britain was engaged in a fierce war with Germany. They wanted material support from India. Therefore they wanted to pacify the agitation by offering promises for self-rule.

On August 22, 1917 the Secretary of State for India Mr. Montague made an announcement in parliament. It stated that 'the policy of His Majesty's government is to associate Indians in administration with a view to realise responsible government in

India as an integral part of the British empire....This will be achieved by stages". It was also pointed out that it will be implemented only after the war was over. Tilak asked "What are the immediate steps here and now?". This was not answered. Gandhiji and others said "Let us put trust in the British and help them unconditionally" in their present difficulty as true friends". This gesture was however betrayed after the war was won.

In 1918 a war conference was called by the viceroy to which Tilak and Annie Beasant were not invited. Even leaders like Mohammad Ali, Shoukat Ali, Rabindranath Tagore were not taken to confidence. The officials and moderates were boosted up for their collaboration in war effort. Millions of rupees, enormous quantities of food grains and other agricultural products, lacs of Indian soldiers and servants were utilized during the war. People of India sacrificed heavily inspite of their poverty. Gandhiji went out even to recruit people for the army and fell dangerously ill by overworking. All this only protected Britain and its oppressive empire. Tilak angrily asked again and again "why should we come forward to protect that India in which we have no rights, in which we are treated like slaves?" (Ram Gopal; How India Struggled for Freedom p. 255.) An order was issued by the magistrate at Bombay under defence of India rules forbidding Tilak from making speeches without his permission.

On July 8th 1918 the famous 'Montague - Chelemsford reforms' were announced to pacify the Indian unrest. Here again the vital subjects like finance, home, defence, commerce etc., were reserved. Local self government, health, education etc were offered to Indian ministers under the Viceroy. The 'Montford' report was not acceptable to congress and the muslim league. They demanded a statutory guarantee for a full responsible government within 15 years. But moderates under Surendranath Bannerjee's leadership accepted the scheme of reforms.

The great war ended in 1918 with the 'defeat of Germany and all its allies. A peace conference was called in France. The Indian National Congress demanded that India should be represented. But it was rejected by the victorious England. The League of Nations was founded in Geneva in 1919. Indian leaders again demanded that the principle of self determination for nations as adopted by the

League of Nations should also be applied to India. The pride of victory and arrogance of military power made England look down on Indians and reject their demands. The colonial Empires of European nations in Asia, Africa and South America were continued as they were before the war. The white man ruled over the black races as before. Slaves remained slaves and more oppression followed.

Turkey who fought against Britain in the war was broken up and humiliated. The great seat of Khilafat respected by muslims all over the world was broken up in the peace treaty at Geneva in 1919. This enraged the entire muslim world. The Indian muslims also rose in revolt. The famous Khilafat movement was headed by the Ali brothers and Gandhiji himself supported it. Hindus and muslims joined hands against the British imperialism. But soon Turkey itself came under Kamal Pasha who brought about revolutionary changes in Islamic tradition ignoring the Khilafat.

In the meanwhile Lokamanya Tilak went to London in connection with a case in a court against an English author. A book by name 'Indian unrest' by one Valentine Chirol had published defamatory passages. Tilak appeared in the case. In England and got his liberty to speak. He canvassed support for India's freedom from the British labour party. Mr. Lansbury was its leader.

The labour party won a number of seats in the British parliament in that year. It became a strong opposition party and supported the Indian national leaders. Tilak appealed to the conscience of Britishers to do justice to the Indian people.

Lala Lajpath Roy went to America at the instance of Tilak. Dr. N.S. Hardikar of Karnataka and K.D. Shastri of Maharashtra accompanied him. They opened a branch of Home Rule League in Sanfrancisco, in 1919. These national leaders travelled widely in America to present to the Americans the case of India's freedom. They got enormous support from friends in America.

Annie Beasant and her colleagues in the Theosophical societies thought that the British will keep their promise of Swaraj for India step by step. The 'Montford' reforms were welcomed by them as the first step. But soon they were disappointed. After winning the war Britain forgot all its promises. They began charging the Indian

leaders that they hindered the war effort. A committee under an english officer by name Rowlatt was appointed to enquire into cases of sedition against Indians. Rowlatt also suggested legal and military measures to put down the agitation for Home Rule. This dark betrayal of the Indian trust drowned all hopes of expectations. A fierce and long struggle had to be launched again to march towards the cherished goal of independence.

1919 was an year of tragedy for India. The great country was downcast with frestration and anger. As the saying goes 'we asked for bread and we got stones'. The force of British arms struck awe and terror in the wake of their victory. People's wrath was filled to the brim ready to burst against the foreign domination. They were seriously searching for a new way. The darkest night was also the forerunner of a new dawn. The dawn of the Gandhian era.

CHAPTER - X

And Then Came Mahatma Gandhi

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pictures to us in poetic language the coming of Gandhiji on the arena of our struggle for freedom. He writes in his discovery of India thus:

"And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things and most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top he emerged from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. "Get off the backs of these peasants and workers", he told us, "all of you who live by their exploitation, get rid of the system that produces their poverty and misery". Under Gandhiji's leadership political freedom took new shape and acquired a new content... The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view"..... (Nehru: Discovery of India Chapter VIII P. 427.)

Born on October 2nd 1869. Mohandas Gandhi was the last son of Karamchand Gandhi, dewan of Rajkot in Gujarat. It was a small princely state loyal to the British crown. Gandhi grew up like any average boy. But he was extremely sensitive to truth and love. He readily owned his mistakes and confessed before his elders. He willingly suffered any punishment to his wrongs and immediately corrected himself. He became a barrister at law after his education in London in 1893. He later went to South Africa to work for an

Indian business house by name Dada Abdulla and company, as their legal advisor. South Africa was a colony of Britain ruled by the whites from early 19th century. The black Africans were treated as slaves. There were other Asian people working as indentured labourers under European masters. They were also treated as inferiors.

Indians from Gujarat, Tamilnadu, and Bombay provinces had been recruited in large numbers to work in mines, factories and plantations owned by the whites. Several businessmen and other professionals from Sind, Punjab and Gujarat had also settled down in South Africa. They had even grown rich. But none of them had any rights as citizens in the South African states. They were insulted and denied any sort of equal treatment with the white ruling class. Even as a barrister Gandhi suffered such insults. He was thrown out of a first class compartment by a white man though he had a first class ticket. He was beaten up when he claimed his right to sit in a horse-carriage with a ticket. The barbers and washermen refused to serve a black barrister. Gandhi saw these injustices, perpetrated on Indians and decided to fight for winning these rights and live as honourable human beings in South Africa. In Pretoria, in Johansberg and in Natal he organised associations of Indians under the name Natal Indian Congress. The South African Government passed humiliating laws like personal registration of Indian residents, making religious marriages illegal, asking for thumb impressions like criminals and levying a tax on their heads. Gandhi discovered a unique method of fighting which he called nonviolent Satyagraha. He trained his followers to refuse to obey all such unjust laws and peacefully suffer all the consequences. He advocated non-retaliation when attacked by the police and prepared them to face hard imprisonment. It was a remarkable spectacle of unarmed illiterate, common labourers standing up in defiance against a mighty government ruled by a military general called General Smuts. Gandhi himself led the agitation for abolition of all humiliating laws and went to jail. Thousands of men and women refused to obey such laws and followed him. The struggle went on from 1894 onwards. It was intensified when Gandhi came back again from India to lead the struggle against anti-Asiatic legislation in Transval in 1902. Thereafter Gandhi gave up his profession as barrister and lived on agriculture in a farm called the Phoenix settlement near Durban (later he also organised an agricultural

settlement called Tolstoy farm near Johansberg). He built these ashrams and trained the satyagrahis for the great campaign. This ashram is still working near Durban as a social welfare centre for Indians and Africans.

In 1908 Gandhi's nonviolent civil disobedience movement succeeded and General Smuts had to withdraw all anti Indian legislation in South Africa. Indians got regular citizenship rights and were able to pursue their professions and avocations with an honourable legal standing. This was a great triumph and Gandhi's name was hailed everywhere. Count Leo Tolstoy of Russia paid tribute to Gandhi's courage and innovative spirit in discovering a unique alternative to armed conflict to settle political disputes. Even before coming back to India in 1915 a biography of Gandhi as a hero of Sathyagraha was written and published by his associate Reverend Doke. Gokhale went to south Africa and negotiated with the British government to bring about a settlement. Gokhale also hailed Gandhi as the future leader of the Indian struggle for freedom.

In 1915 Gandhi came back to India and settled down in Ahmedabad. He started an Ashram along with thirty of his colleagues who worked and lived with him in South Africa. He invited people who shared his life-philosophy of truth and non-violence to join him in this simple living like the Indian villagers and work for high ideals, to join him. He had to suffer social boycott when he agreed to take-in a family of untouchables into his Ashram. But soon he braved the criticism and slowly campaigned for the abolition of the inhuman observance of untouchability in India. He said that Hindu religion must be cleansed of such abuses and pointed out that noble ideals of ancient rishis should be understood and practiced in the right spirit. Gandhi's ideas of social, economic and political transformation in India attracted eminent saintly souls towards him. Gandhiji moved into a spacious area on the banks of river Sabarmathi on the outskirts of Ahmedabad to build the famous 'Sabarmathi Ashram' in 1916. Those who joined him as inmates for life at this agricultural settlement were Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Mahadev Desai, Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, Kishorelal Mashurwala and Joseph Corneleus Kumarappa, Miss. Amtul salam and Miss Madeliene Slade from England who later took the name of Mira Behn. Political struggle for freedom was only a part of a

great movement that Gandhiji launched for a total transformation of human society. His dream of a new society was based on establishment of peace with socio economic equality through dynamic non-violence.

He called this a Sarvodaya Social Order. The basic Principles of Sarvodaya were revealed to Gandhiji when he read a book by the English poet John Ruskin by name "Unto this Last" in 1904. He was then working in South Africa. An English friend and co-worker Henry Graham Polak gave the book to Gandhi for reading over a railway journey. The contents of this book gripped him. Ruskin had argued in the book how a society has to be built on the lines of doing justice to the lowliest and the last. Gandhi writes in his autobiography a chapter called the 'Magic spell of a book' and says

'I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin. It made me transform my life.... The teachings of 'Unto this last' I Understood to be:-

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

.....I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice'. (Autobiography - Gandhi. P. 224.) Gandhiji translated this book to Gujarati and named it "Sarvodaya".

In 1917 The congress met at Calcutta. Lokamanya Tilak proposed the name of Annie Beasant as President. It was unanimously accepted. The moderates had given place to direct activists and agitators for full freedom. Gandhiji was still outside the congress. He wanted to try out his method of nonviolent, non-cooperation in India on a smaller scale before putting it before the national body for acceptance. It was godsent that in the same year he was called to lead the first Sathyagraha movement on behalf of the Indigo farmers in Champaran district of Bihar. Again it was a

triumph for truth and nonviolence. India woke up to the great strength of Gandhiji's method. A moral and ethical alternative to armed rebellion and violence was found.

The history of India came to be powerfully influenced by it. Rabindranath Tagore called this new leader as Mahatma. People accepted this and dearly called him Mahatma Gandhi. A name that has adorned the annals of world history permanently.

Indigo trade was a monopoly of the East India company. English planters compelled farmers in Bengal and Bihar to grow the plant and sell it to them at cheap rate. It was a loss to the poor farmers who had to forego food crops. The British authorities made a law in Champaran that a third of the area should grow Indigo. It was called "Theen Khatia". Peasants protested. They appealed to Gandhi to fight their cause. When he came and met the planters they refused to do justice to the peasants. They called Gandhi an outsider and asked him to quit. Gandhi refused and began an enquiry to gather facts and figures. He was joined by prof. J.B. Kripalani who was then a Professor at Muzafferpur. Babu Rajendra Prasad, Babu Brijkishore and Rajkumar Shukla were the leaders of Bihar. Gandhi was called before a magistrate for defying his order to leave Champaran. When there was a massive following of farmers and others behind Gandhi, he was let free to enquire into the condition of farmers.

In the course of his enquiry Gandhi visited many villages and saw for himself that poverty, squalor, illiteracy and illhealth were rampant. He organised the villagers and with facts and figures submitted petitions to government with hundreds of farmers attesting their signatures. He asked them to be fearless and disobey their planter bosses. The government of Bihar was compelled to appoint a committee to go into the problem. Gandhi was appointed a member. The report supported the case of the indigo-farmers. The planters were ordered not to compel them to grow indigo. The 'Theen Khatia' system that ruled in the area for hundred years was abolished.

But what struck Gandhi was the innate response to his nonviolent struggle by the peace loving peasants of Bihar. The gentle Bihari Babu Rajendra Prasad who sacrificed a big practice

at the bar in Patna to serve the poorest of the poor, became a legendary hero. Gandhiji stayed on in Champaran to organise village reconstruction on a voluntary basis. Volunteers from all over India came to Champaran. Kasturba led the women's wing. Kripalani taught in a tiny school for village children. Gandhi himself organised village sanitation. He built latrines which was his favourite work wherever he saw dirt and squalor. Gandhi learnt for the first time that to serve the poor is to go to their help in reconstructing their unfortunate state of living by voluntary service. He then organised them for collective action to fight injustices. Champaran was the first successful struggle that put a new courage in the hearts of poor peasants and labourers.

Immediately after this came the struggle of the labourers in the textile mills in Ahmedabad. Here it was a conflict between Indian mill owners and factory labourers. Again there was a call for a unique mill strike. The labourers were demanding higher wages to meet the soaring prices due to the first world war. It was by all considerations a just demand. The mill owners refused to respond. Gandhi took the lead for a nonviolent struggle.

Ahmedabad was Gandhi's hometown. He was greatly respected and loved both by the mill owners and the labourers. Gandhi argued with his friend Ambalal Sarabhai the leader of mill owners and also a patron of the Sabarmathi Ashram. He pleaded for a just enhancement of wages to mill hands to meet their struggle for life amidst soaring prices and a terrible outbreak of plague due to the world war. He suggested that the labourers' claims can be settled by arbitration by a third party. The mill owners' Association rejected the offer. Gandhi advised the mill workers to go on an indefinite strike peacefully. He laid down strict conditions for a nonviolent strike. (1) There must be nonviolence in demonstrations (2) they must never molest blacklegs' (3) Never to depend on alms (4) To do some honest work to maintain themselves and (5) not to yield till their cause is won. The leaders of the strike understood and accepted the conditions. Meetings were held everyday. Anusuya Behn Sarabhai, Ambalal's sister, was on the side of Gandhi and herself organised the strike. Vallabhai Patel and Shankarlal Banker joined Gandhi. The strike went on for 21 days. The mill owners did not yield. Gandhi patiently negotiated for a settlement but could not succeed. The workers had to be employed elsewhere to earn their

daily bread. Anusuya Behn thought of construction work at the Ashram. Hundreds of labourers cheerfully accepted to earn their wages by carrying mud from the river bed to the Ashram. A new wave of strength swept over them. But how long to go on was the question. The workers were getting frustrated. Gandhiji thought deeply and announced that he will go on a fast if there was no amicable settlement. This was the first fast for a public cause. Labourers were shocked at this sudden turn. The mill-owners were touched to the quick by this selfsuffering of a noble soul. There was no illwill in the fast. There were a number of eminent friends who went into action for a settlement. There was finally a happy settlement. The labourers got their demands fully satisfied. All gathered together and Ambalal and Anusuya Behn distributed sweets. The Ahmedabad mill workers union founded by Gandhiji has kept up a unique tradition of mutual trust between capitalists and labourers. Unity, fearlessness and nonviolence were the key principles which Gandhi emphasised and they triumphed.

It was a similar case with regard to a Satyagraha of farmers and peasants in Kheda district of Gujarat. It was a case of land-tax. The government was forcing the farmers to pay up exorbitant tax even though there was famine in the area. The poor peasants could not even sustain themselves. Gandhiji first wrote to the collector invoking the clause of exemption in such cases. The authorities were adamant. Gandhi went to the spot, made factual survey and declared that the farmers should refuse to pay the landtax. Even the rich farmers said that they will withhold payment until the government suspends collection from poor farmers. Their crop was less than 25% in that year. Finally the government had to yield to this nonviolent agitation. Sardar Vallabhai Patel was the leader of this agitation.

These campaigns put great courage in the minds of the people to stand and fight against a mighty government on moral force. Collective nonviolent action became the order of the day. But large masses had yet to be disciplined to strictly follow the disciplines that Gandhiji prescribed for Satyagraha. He insisted on nothing less than adhering to truth and fearless nonviolence. The leaders of the country were greatly influenced by the first successes of Gandhi's method. Violence and secret rebellions had failed in India. Masses of ordinary people were unable to organise

militant forces for the simple reason that they could not wield arms. They could not indulge in mass-murder as in a war. Gandhiji said "nonviolence is the law of the human beings even as violence is that of the beasts". The moral force of a right cause and the preparedness of people to sacrifice their all in the pursuit of a good cause can move mountains. Satyagraha according to Gandhi knows no victors or vanquished. It helps both sides to realise the justness of the cause and part as friends after the conflict. The goodness in man is more powerful than evil forces if it is properly disciplined and organised. We see the truth of it in the history of our struggle under Gandhiji's leadership.

Jallianwallabaug Tragedy 1919

The first world war had ended. It had brought untold misery and suffering to a large population all over the world. Thousands were killed on the battle fields. Millions of people were victims of starvation, plunder, pestilence and epidemic. In India the mute sufferings of the helpless masses all over the country under British military tyranny were unbearable. The hopes of Home-rule were also shattered as stated in the last chapter. The Rowlatt bills were passed. Even the little freedom that was there before the war was taken away. Speaking, writing, associating with agitations and even discussions about the demand for freedom were to be labelled as sedition. Anybody on whom there was suspicion could be jailed without trial. By force of arms India was to be bound hand and foot to servillence under a colonial rule. Defence of India act was continued even after peace treaty was signed. The self-respect of a great nation was strewn to the winds.

Gandhi was just recovering from a serious illness after his campaigns to recruit people for helping the British in winning the war. He could not bear the betrayal of the trust that he had placed in the sense of gratitude of the British. He founded the 'Satyagraha Sabha' in Bombay to resist this move to suppress all freedoms. Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Sarojini Naidu joined him. He rushed to Delhi to ask the Indian members of the viceroy's council to resist the final passing of this abnoxious Rowlatt act. Rt. Honourable Srinivas Shastry eloquently pleaded for not enforcing this legislative measure. But the Viceroy was not moved. Gandhiji went to Madras. Sri. C. Rajagopalachari, Vijayaraghavachari and G.A. Natesan

were with him. The news of Rowlatt bill becoming an act reached them there. The whole country shuddered at the ensuing consequences of this evil act. Gandhi felt restless. He woke up in the morning with a new idea. A call for a nationwide 'hartal' in protest against the act. He writes feelingly about it in his autobiography. "Let all the people of India suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer. The muslims will also join the fast for 24 hours". Rajaji at once agreed. Gandhiji drafted a brief appeal. The date was fixed at first to be 30th March 1919 but subsequently changed to April 6th. This communication was carried with a lightning speed through papers and telegrams. Gandhi writes to say "But who knows how it all came about? the whole of India from one end to the other, towns as well as villages, observed a complete hartal on that day. It was a most wonderful spectacle".....(Gandhi - Auto-biography Chapter XXX P. 349).

On the 6th of April Gandhi was in Bombay. All was not well in other places. Ahmedabad flared up violently. There were riots and bloodshed. In Punjab it was worse. People tried to beat and burn up government officials and the police. Englishmen were attacked. A white woman who was a christian missionary in Amritsar was manhandled and killed on the streets. Gandhi again felt intense agony. He wanted to rush to Punjab but was not allowed by the authorities. He was stopped at Delhi and sent back to Bombay. This enraged the people more. Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifuddin Kichleau the respected leaders of Punjab were earlier arrested. Lajpat Rai was away in America. A leaderless mass of people were brutally beaten up by the police. The military men took even more cruel measures. All meetings and processions were banned.

A Public meeting was announced to be held on April 13th 1919 at Jalianwala Baug in Amritsar. It was also the day of the festival of 'Vaishakhi'. The British government became ferocious. A ruthless military general by name general Dyer took charge of Amritsar. He banned the meeting and posted soldiers all over the city. Yet thousands of people gathered at the Baug(park) which was surrounded by high walls of buildings on three sides with only one narrow way to enter. As the meeting started general Dyer with a batallian arrived and suddenly ordered to his men to 'shoot'. Shots in hundreds came down like thunders on the unarmed crowd of

innocent people. 1650 rounds in all!. Shells showered from all directions directly on the bodies of men women and children. Panic stricken they shrieked and fell down dead in that park. A beastly and inhuman revenge was all that general Dyer thought. He wanted to terrorise by brute force and mow down all agitations in the country once and for all. This was a massacre of the most grim kind. More than four hundred people were mercilessly killed in coldblood.

A period of terrible oppression followed in Punjab. News were suppressed. But the grim tragedy of Amritsar was too horrible an incident that could be kept secret. The whole country stood aghast. People lost their cool and flared up against this monstrous act of general Dyer. A wave of condemnation and demand for reprisal was sweeping over the entire country. Tagore renounced his knighthood and wrote to the Viceroy thus:

"The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context by humiliation..... my countrymen are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings".

(Ramgopal: How India struggled for freedom...P. 313.)

Gandhi declared three days' penitential fast at Sabarmathi Ashram. He was shocked to the core at this huge outbreak of violence. He confessed that 'it was his' himalayan blunder'. Martial law was declared in Punjab. Gandhi was not allowed to enter Punjab. He wanted to prevent more violence and withdraw the countrywide movement on the 18th of April 1919.

CHAPTER - XI

Towards Civil Disobedience

The urge for freedom was mounting in the country. People were realising the corroding evils of slavery. Amritsar tragedy had opened the eyes of the people. The sense of helplessness was being replaced by a hope of consolidating a fearless moral resistance. The demand for enquiry into the Punjab affairs by eminent Indians and the Indian National Congress could not be resisted. The government appointed the Hunter commission of enquiry. But this was only to misguide and defend Dyer and governors like Sir Michael O Dwyer. The Congress appointed its own commission to inquire independently. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Abbas Tyabji, Fazli-ul-Huq and M.R. Jaykar were members. The report of this committee laid bare the evil intentions of a colonial rule to strike terror in the subjects and compel their loyal submission. Gandhi began to feel that the system of government was making India a nation of slaves and cowards. He said Indians who accepted the system would be willing partners in their own slavery.

The Indian National Congress met in Amritsar in December 1919. More than eight thousand delegates assembled. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the president elect. Lokamanya Tilak came back from England to be present at the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi was also there. Deshabandhu Chitharanjan Das, Moulana Mohammed Ali and Shoukat Ali the heroes of the Khilafat movement, Pandit Malaviya and other eminent leaders were present. Jalianwala Bagh became a place of pilgrimage to all patriots.

Just before this session of the Congress the British parliament announced the Mountague Chelmesford reforms. This was to divert the people from supporting the Congress demand of full respon-

sible government in India. President Wilson of America and Prime Minister Lloyd George of Britain had declared that all nations have a right to self-determination. India only asked this right mentioned in the great international peace Treaty of 1919.

Gandhi was prepared to give a chance for these reforms. But Lokamanya Tilak and C.R.Das opposed them. They said that the demand of Indians is for full responsible government and not eyewashes like the present reforms. In London also, there was a meeting of citizens who supported the Indian demand. Tilak had left a deep impression on some well-meaning Britishers. The congress established a propaganda mission with Lokamanya Tilak as convenor.

Events were moving fast. The Khilafat movement was growing strong. The Indian muslims rallied round Gandhi's call for a struggle to restore the respect of the Caliph of Turkey who was also a great religious head of muslims. Gandhi thought that it was wrong to humiliate the Caliph after the war had been won. But the British authorities were adamant. The muslim league of India declared a non-cooperation movement, under Gandhi's leadership. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Ali brothers, Moulana Azad and Dr. Ansari supported the move. A healthy wave of hindu muslim unity was gathering strength.

The congress and the league were holding their sessions together at the same place. The Punjab affairs and the Khilafat question were together taken up for a countrywide mass agitation. Several high ranking muslims renounced their titles and honours given by the British government. The country was preparing for all sacrifices to achieve freedom.

Gandhi formally entered the Congress at the Calcutta session in 1919. Lalalajapath Rai presided. This special session was called to discuss Gandhi's proposal of non-violent- non-cooperation or 'Sathyagraha' as it was called. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru welcomed the new role of the Congress in becoming a people's platform for an active struggle against the British. Gandhi moved a great resolution. Over 20,000 people who attended this special session gave a thundering support. The battle cry rose to the skies. "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai" and 'Vande Mataram' filled the air.

The resolution of the Congress said "There can be no contentment in India without redress of the two wrongs and the only effectual means to vindicate honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swaraj. There is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi until the said wrongs are righted and Swaraj is established".

Lokamanya Tilak passed away on the 1st of August 1920. This was a great blow for the country. The leadership of the campaign for Swaraj fell squarely on Gandhi. After the special session of the Congress at Calcutta the regular annual session met in Nagpur in December 1920. Sri. Vijayaraghavachari presided over the session. The main resolution was the declaration of the non-cooperation movement under Gandhiji's leadership. C.R. Das himself moved the resolution. There was a huge overwhelming number supporting it.

The Programme of non-cooperation was spelt out by Gandhiji Thus:

1. Surrender of titles and honorary offices. Resignations from membership of local bodies.
2. Boycott of official functions.
3. Boycott of schools and Colleges, establishment of national schools.
4. Boycott of British courts and setting up private courts of law.
5. Refusal to serve as recruits outside India.
6. Withdrawal from elections to the councils.
7. Boycott of all foreign goods, Swadeshi Campaign.
8. Observance of non-violence and conducting the campaign under strict discipline.

In the pursuit of this movement Gandhiji also prescribed the participation of sathyagrahis in promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, re-

removal of untouchability and wearing handspun handwoven cloth called Khadi along with spinning on the Charka as a daily discipline. These were termed as constructive activities. The Congress approved the programme.

Gandhiji also brought a change in the constitution of the Congress. There was a working committee of 15 members. Wearing of Khadi was compulsory. The Country was divided into linguistic units for provincial Congress committees. Proceedings at the sessions were conducted in the national language Hindustani. The membership fee was reduced to four annas.

Non co-operation resounded with tremendous popularity. Great and eminent lawyers like Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Asaf Ali, M.R. Jayakar, Vallabhai patel, Gave up their practice and became full-time public workers for attainment of freedom. Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali brothers undertook a whillwind tour of the country. Lacs of people used to swarm at public meetings and pledge their support to the freedom movement. Gandhiji' collected a crore of rupees for the Tilak swaraj fund.

The response of the younger generation was magnificent. Over one lac of students left their schools and colleges and joined the movement. Hundreds of national schools were started. Everybody began participating in sacrificial spinning. In thousands of villages in the tiny cottages of the poor farmers in India the spinning wheel began to hum.

The music of the Charka as poet Sarojini Naidu expressed, filled the air with a rapturous melody and like Krishna's flute roused the spirit of India to himalayan endeavour to break the chains of slavery.

While traveling in Tamilnadu in 1921 Gandhi saw the utter poverty of the tiller of the soil who formed the backbone of India's destiny. He argued within himself. 'I am working for their emancipation. I have to be their representative to face the British empire and fight on their behalf. Why should I have more cloth on my body than these poor peasants have? I should reduce my wants to the minimum. I live on public support. It is a sin to spend more on myself. So I take a vow to wear a loin cloth at my waist and an upper cloth over my chest. I am the servant of "Daridra Narayan"

(The God called the poor) from now". The saintly picture of the great Mahatma rose on the Indian horizon as the famous "Naked Fakir" with the tremendous glow of the Indian soul, holding the world in wonder and symbolising the triumph of moral force over temporal power.

The Country was ready to take the plunge with Mahatma Gandhi. Young Jawaharlal Nehru rose like a meteor and inspired the youth of India. He was the more illustrious son of an illustrious father Motilal Nehru. Brilliant as a scholar, courageous as a fighter for human liberty, deep in his study of world politics, bewitching as the idol of the Indian masses and stalwart as a patriot Jawaharlal blazed a fiery trail. Mahatma Gandhi became his sheet anchor in the pursuit of his ideal. To Gandhiji he was the ablest of coworkers.

So also rose another star of youthforce from Bengal, Subhaschandra Bose. A hero and a patriot who spurned the coveted civil service under the British to serve the motherland's fight for freedom. Subhas Babu took up the reins of leadership under C.R. Das. He came into the Congress as a powerful organiser of volunteers to brave the bayonets and guns of an alien rule. The call for noncooperation and the challenge of a brave struggle under Gandhiji drew Subhas Babu and his elder brother Saratchandra Bose to the vortex of Sathyagraha. Bose and Nehru formed the vanguard of the youth behind the Mahatma. Subhas Babu gave his clarion call to the youth of India thus: "Do you want the joy of liberty and the solace of freedom? If so you must pay the price, And the price of liberty is suffering and sacrifice".* (D.P. Roy)

The first major clash between the government and the non-cooperators took place during the visit of Britain's prince of Wales in 1921. The congress boycotted the visit. Mass demonstrations were held against the prince wherever he went. Thousands were imprisoned. Gandhiji had made jail going an honour for a patriot. People were not afraid anymore. Lathi charges and police firing to disperse crowds became rampant all over the country. Masses of people rose in peaceful revolts.

National newspapers were started in most of the big cities of India. Gandhiji started 'Young India' in English and 'Navajeevan' in Gujarathi. He gave a great fillip to journalism in Indian languages.

The stirring call for action given by national leaders reached the masses in the remote villages through thousands of volunteers. They all spoke in the language of the people and carried the message of non-cooperation and civil disobedience as spelt out by the founder of Sathyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi.

On August 11, 1920 Gandhiji wrote in Young India thus: "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer. But it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant.....It is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire. I am not pleading with India to practice non-violence because she is weak. I want her to practice non-violence being conscious of her inner strength and power..... I want India to recognise that she has a soul that cannot perish and that she can rise triumphant over any physical combination of a whole world". - (Nayantara Saigal - freedom movement in India p. 78.)

Romain Rolland the famous nobel laureate of France wrote a biography of Gandhi in 1924. He remarked "This is the man who has shaken the foundations of the British empire. He has introduced into human politics the strongest religious impetus of the last two thousands years".

The awakening in the vast expanse of India was tremendous. About 30,000 people defied the government and went to jail. Midnapore in Bengal, Guntur in Andhra, Raiberali in Uttar Pradesh struck headlines by their no tax campaigns. Jawaharlal was arrested in Raiberali. The tribals of Chota Nagpur refused to pay unjust levies. The Akali movement in Punjab defied Government interference. In Malabar the Moplahs revolted against money lenders and Zamindars. It was a wonderful sight to see the huge crowds of villagers rallying around the call of Mahatma Gandhi for boycott of British goods. The volume of textile imports from England came down to half. Swadeshi cloth and Khadi were spreading fast. Jawaharlal called the Khadi uniform and the famous Gandhi cap as 'The livery of freedom'.

The government of India came down with a heavy hand to suppress this wide spread non-co-operation. The Congress com-

mittees and the Khilafat committees were declared unlawful. National news papers were banned. Meetings and speeches were prohibited. Deshbandhu Chitharanjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Lalalajpath Rai, Gopabandu Das and many other eminent leaders were arrested.

Gandhiji was still free. He wrote to the Viceroy thus:

"Looting of property, assaults on innocent people, brutal treatment of the prisoners in jail, the lawless repression has made mass civil disobedience inevitable..... At present I will declare such a disobedience in Bardoli of Gujarat province. I will strictly conform to the conditions of non-violence". But before he started he made a fervent plea to the Viceroy to revise the policies and stop repression. The Congress working Committee endorsed starting of Bardoli sathyagraha. The Viceroy rejected his plea.

Before even a formal declaration of sathyagraha the whole country rose up in defiance and masses of people came on to the streets to protest against government actions. There was no responsible leadership in most of the places, Mob fury brokeout against the police and people became violent in hatred. At Chouri-Choura a village near Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh a procession was stopped by force. The people lost their temper. The few police men could not face the angry crowd. They ran into the police station. But the fierce vengeance of the mad mob took a monstrous turn. The police station was set on fire. Twenty two policemen were mercilessly burnt alive. The rampage ran amock. The whole movement was shattered by this shameful act. Gandhiji was shocked to the core. He immediately withdrew the non-cooperation movement and stopped the entire programme of protests and demonstrations.

The leaders who were inside the jail became angry at this step that Gandhiji had taken. But Gandhi was firm. He was convinced that the masses in India had not understood his technique of true Sathyagraha. Mob-fury, he said, is the worst enemy in our struggle. Even if it has happened in one remote insignificant village it only shows how illequipped we are to conduct a non-violent struggle of a brave and disciplined Sathyagrahis.

The British Government was uncharitable to Gandhi's moral

stand. It broadcast to the world that Gandhi was encouraging a violent revolt against the established government to uproot them. This they termed as sedition. Gandhiji wrote three articles in Young India explaining his stand and the ideal for which the Indian National Congress was struggling. All the three articles were declared as seditious. Gandhiji was arrested and charged with a conspiracy to spread disaffection against the government and encourage lawlessness and anarchy by his call for civil disobedience.

The Great Trial of Mahatma Gandhi

The Mahatma was summoned to a court for a trial. He stood charged with breaking the laws of the government. As Gandhiji walked into the court the whole congregation stood up in respect. He was a prisoner, yet an acknowledged leader of a great nation. He pleaded guilty without any hesitation and made a statement.

"I trusted the British Government. But the Punjab crime and denial of justice to the muslim khilafat has completely changed me. The masses of India are semistarved and are slowly sinking to lifelessness by the foreign exploiter. I have no doubt whatever that both England and the town dwellers of India who are its agents, will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter..... The administration of law is thus prostituted... Unfortunately they do not realise their crime..... I have no personal illwill. But I consider it to be a sin to have affection for this system.... Non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good..... Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for such non-co-operation. I plead guilty to your charges. If you, Mr. Judge, believe that this law is evil you have to resign. If you believe it is good for the people you will have to give me the severest punishment."

Judge Bloomfield addressed the prisoner as 'Mahatma' and with humility pronounced that he was duty bound to sentence Gandhiji to six years' imprisonment as was done in the case of Lokamanya Tilak. The entire crowd in the court stood up and

bowed in respect to their great saintly leader who was pronounced a criminal by the law of the foreign rulers of India.

Gandhiji was taken to Yerawda prison near Poona. But the unrest in the country grew more and several leaders were arrested. Jawaharlal Nehru, then a young man of 34 years led a farmers' agitation in Uttar Pradesh. He was a widely travelled highly educated brilliant leader. He was also greatly influenced by the Russian revolution of 1917 under the leadership of Lenin. Socialism was his creed. In Allahabad he attracted a large number of educated youth to join the Swadeshi movement. Picketing of shops dealing foreign cloth became a raging campaign. Jawaharlal Nehru was sentenced to 18 months of rigorous imprisonment.

CHAPTER - XII

Parting of Ways

With Gandhiji in Jail, the nonviolent noncooperation was difficult to pursue without him. Moreover as the supreme leader of the new path he had withdrawn the struggle after the Chowri-Choura killings. Most of the other top leaders of the Congress were behind bars. Taking advantage of the adversity in the course of the national struggle the British government began to divide the people. The muslims of India were drifting away from the movement because the Khilafat agitation was a failure. The hindus were forming communal organisations for dominating over other religious minorities. The new reforms in administration where the legislative councils became elected bodies attracted the congress groups to fight elections and enter the councils as non-official members. The British supported the minorities and the rich loyalists to enter the councils. The muslims were given separate electorates by which muslims could only vote for muslim candidates. All this created new problems of a race for positions and political importance.

Inside the congress there was a strong group called the Swaraj party who were eager to enter the councils of the British government. Their intention was to show that they have the backing of the people and to strongly represent the demands of the people in the councils. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru were the frontrank leaders of the Swaraj party. They were asking for dominion status under the British protection. Complete independence and breaking away from England was not yet a powerful popular demand.

In 1923 these elections were held in all British provinces in India. The voters were only the upper class rich Zamindars,

professionals and English educated few. The ordinary people were kept away. Congressmen, muslims, sikhs, raja's and nawabs, contested the elections separately. A large number of nationalist leaders were elected. In all big cities the municipal councils came under elected leaders. There was a new wave of enthusiasm to rule ourselves. C.R. Das became the first mayor of Calcutta. Vithalabhai Patel brother of Sardar Vallabha Bhai Patel, president of Ahmedabad municipality, Rajendra Prasad at Patna and Jawaharlal Nehru at Allahabad. These municipalities began to take bold steps in the service of the people. In Poona they put up a statue of Lokamanya Tilak though the government did not approve. In many places Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders were given civic receptions against the orders of the authorities.

Gandhiji was released before his time in 1924. He was operated in prison for appendicitis. A British army doctor Col. Medhak who had great respect for the Mahatma operated him. He was later released to take rest. Gandhiji went into a period of silence. He said he will not start any movement because he was normally bound to undergo six years of imprisonment. But he started a vigorous campaign for what he called the constructive programme of regenerating the life of the millions of poor people in the villages of India. He undertook a 21 days' fast in Delhi at the residence of Dr. Ansari to bring about hindu-muslim concord in the country. Removal of untouchability, prohibition of intoxicating drinks, starting of national schools, village sanitation, planting full-time selfless workers for national upliftment work in villages were Gandhiji's primary programmes. More than all other things he was able to draw thousands of workers for the production and distribution of Khadi in all the provinces. Swadeshi pledge in all walks of life was his mission. The loin clothed soft speaking Mahatma moved about the whole country and became the idol of the masses. Nobody could assail the tremendous popularity of his campaign for social, cultural and economic reformation of the villages of India. The style and ways of living and the attitude of people towards the foreign masters changed amongst the great majority of the educated middle classes in cities and towns. Indirectly it created hundreds of thousands of young patriotic men and women prepared to take up the disciplines of a full fledged nonviolent noncooperation struggle for complete freedom.

In 1924 Ganhihi was elected to preside over the Belgaum congress in Karnataka area of the Bombay province. He tried his best to effect a compromise between Swaraj party and the supporters of noncooperation. He realised that the country has to go a long term of discipline to undertake a fresh struggle. He spoke in plain truthful words about the weaknesses of Indian people which were exploited by the foreign dominators.

During this difficult period, the young extremist national workers became restive. They thought that the British will not yield to the soft words and actions of Gandhiji. They again took to armed revolts in small pockets in Bengal, Bihar, Punjab and Maharashtra. Bombs were thrown at English officials, police officers and military personnel in several places. A few of them were killed. In January 1924 Gopi Mohan Saha of Calcutta murdered an Englishman mistaking him to be the police commissioner of Bengal. Two more incidents followed in Bengal. This terrorist activity was slowly spreading. Inspiration from the Russian, Irish and Italian revolutions through literature stealthily circulated in the country, roused secret groups to action. There was another movement of Industrial workers that was beginning during these years. The Russian revolution had given the call "workers of the world unite! You have nothing to loose but your chains". The textile workers of Bombay and Ahmedabad, the Jute mills workers of Bengal, the workers in British railway companies in India, the workers at the coal mines, workers in Madras and Coimbatore mills formed trade unions. While demanding just wages the workers also backed up national movements by their strikes. The All India Trade Union Congress was formed in 1920. Lala Lajpathrai was the first president. Later on by 1925 the trade unions were well organised on socialist lines. Leaders like S.A. Dange, V.V. Giri, S.M. Joshi, Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu N.S., Ramaswamy, Joseph Baptist, B.P. Wadia who were young socialist revolutionaries led the workers' movements. National congress backed them up. C.R. Das, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose were elected presidents of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. In many of the strikes the workers adopted the method of Gandhian noncooperation. The communists at that time were also associates of the Congress. The idea of national freedom and a socialist India sprouted in the minds of the educated classes. By the years 1927-28 the workers' unions were

powerful forces behind the national movement. This was evident by their part in the protest strikes against the Simon commission in 1928.

The formation of a commission to examine the fitness of Indians for self government under Sir John Simon was another affront against national leaders. There was no Indian on the commission. The commission landed in Bombay on 3rd February, 1928. It was greeted by a complete 'Hartal' in the city. Deserted bazars, closed mills, protest processions crying 'Simon go back' greeted the British statesman. Crowds and crowds in every place demonstrated against the Simon commission. They cried at the top of their voices "Bharath Matha Ki Jai", "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai", 'Simon go back'. The police went into action against the protesters. They fired at crowds to desperse them. In Punjab, Lajpat Rai who headed a procession was hit by a lathi charge and was seriously wounded. Jawaharlal Nehru braved brutal blows at Ailahabad. Lajpat Rai died soon after this attack on him.

In answer to the Simon commission an all party conference was formed to frame a constitution for India under the British Commonwealth. The demand was still for dominion status and not for complete breaking away from the empire. Motilal Nehru presided over a committee and produced a report for administrative reforms. This was called the 'Nehru Report'. This was also rejected by the Government of India.

Martyrdom of Bhagath Singh

When the civil disobedience of respected leaders and the negotiations for self-government failed to move the foreign domination, hot blooded young patriots were greatly upset. They set forth on a blaze of violent revolt. A militant youth organisation called the "Navjawan Bharath Sabha" was formed in Lahore to avenge the brutal attack on Lajpat Rai by direct action. Soon another group called 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' with a wider organisation appeared on the scene. Young college student Bhagath Singh became its livewire. Hundreds of Young men and women pledged to die for the country in armed revolts. An armed group planned the murder of an English police officer by name Saunders in Lahore. Bhagath Singh was its leader. Again in April 1929

Bhagath Singh and Batukeswar Dutt went straight to the Punjab legislative assembly and threw a bomb. The assembly was to pass a bill to arrest the uprisings by the working class. The bomb did not harm anybody. The two young patriots came out to openly confess that they did the act to draw the attention of the authorities to their demand of freedom. A bomb factory was later found out in Lahore. There were terrorist activities in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi. Over one hundred patriots were hunted out and put into prison. They were tortured by the police. Even their sympathisers were punished. The Lahore conspiracy case aroused a nationwide interest. The undertrials, inside the Jails raised slogans and they were brutally beaten-up. A young patriot Jatindranath Das began a fast unto death. The cruelty of the British did not yield. He died a hero for freedom after 63 days of fasting.

Bhagath Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were identified as the forces behind the uprisings. They were condemned to death by hanging in 1931. The whole country resented and condemned these death sentences on brave patriots. Gandhiji appealed to the viceroy to commute the death sentences, though he did not endorse such wild violence. The congress praised the burning patriotism of Bhagath Singh and his associates. The name of Bhagath Singh became a symbol of supreme sacrifice in the cause of freedom. The three comrades were hanged on March 23rd 1931.

Bhagath Singh became a legendary hero for the youth of the country. The methods of Russian revolution of 1917 were also trickling into the country. Mahendra Nath Roy was in exile in Berlin. He was refused entry into India for over two decades. He had participated in the communist revolt under Lenin. The communist international was starting communist parties in other countries. In India the party began to oppose the British rule and planned to uproot the Imperialists from power. In 1927 Shapurji Saklatwala a communist M.P. from London who was an Indian parsi gentleman came to India and toured the country. Bengal became the hotbed of communist activities. Andhra, Kerala and Bombay came under their influence. The industrial labour class became organised under their leadership. The landless peasants and workers in other states joined the agitations against Zamindars protected by the British. Kisan Sabhas were started. Violent attacks on British officials and

offices were on the increase. Oppression by the police and the military under British officers was also intensified. Brutal punishments for all national activities became rampant.

In Bengal a lady student of the university Miss Bina Das openly shot at the governor Stanely Jackson while he presided over the convocation. The bullet missed killing him. Bina Das was sentenced to life imprisonment. Surya Sen a great revolutionary leader was working underground inspiring many such acts of terrorism. He and his lady associates Preethilatha Wadedar and Kalpana Dutt, both college students were caught and imprisoned. Surya Sen was later hanged in Dacca.

But the sporadic acts of violence and high strung emotional patriotism of the young martyrs could not shake the foreign rulers. In an armed violent conflict might becomes right. But they served a great purpose. The political awakening amongst the educated youth became irresistible. The country's urge for complete independence was galvanised. A great leap forward in the struggle for freedom became immanent. The nation again turned towards Mahatma Gandhi for a renewed peoples' movement.

CHAPTER - XIII

Demand of Complete Independence

On the banks of river Ravi in Lahore the Indian National congress met in 1929 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was just forty years of age. Motilal Nehru the father who was the previous president handed over the presidentship to the son. Gandhiji who was the supreme leader of the struggle at that time himself proposed Jawaharlal's name. Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose were the acknowledged leaders of the Youth of India determined to fight for complete independence. The elders also fell in line with the demand and all talk of dominion status or home rule under the British empire was given up for good.

In 1928 Gandhiji had given a call for a boycott movement against foreign goods. Every town and city organised volunteer corps under the congress to collect foreign cloth and make a bonfire of them. Khadi cloth was sold at the doors of the people propagating the idea of economic freedom of the poor villages of India. Every sunday was declared as National Flag day. People hoisted and saluted the tricolour flag with the symbol of charka in the centre and volunteers staged rallies around it. The ban orders were broken. There was no town in the country where this open struggle was not initiated.

Jawaharlal Nehru declared in 1929 " We stand for the fullest freedom of India. The congress will not acknowledge the right of the British parliament to dictate to us in any way..... we appeal to parliament and the conscience of the world..... India submits no longer to any foriegn domination". Complete Independence was

declared as the objective of the Congress. All cooperation to the rulers was stopped. Congressmen and nationalists resigned from councils and legislatures.

'Poorna Swaraj' was the climax of the nation's demand. The congress issued an appeal to the nation to observe 26th of January 1930 as the Independence day and take the pledge of working for complete Independence. The pledge asserted the "inalienable right of the Indian people to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities for growth..... The British government has deprived us of this freedom. It has exploited the masses and ruined India politically, economically and culturally... India must sever British connection and attain 'Poorna Swaraj'. (Ramgopal, How India struggled for freedom p.360).

The Congress also declared that it would launch a non-violent, non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement under the supreme leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The nation was bubbling with great enthusiasm for a new breakthrough.

Gandhiji wrote an open letter to the Viceroy in Young India. He placed the following minimum immediate demand on behalf of the people before a gradual transfer of power is effected. Abolition of excise revenues and total prohibition of intoxicating drinks; Reduction of rupee ratio; reduction of land revenue to half; abolition of salt tax; reduction of British military expenditure to half; salaries of high officials to be slashed in proportion to the revenues; protective tariff on foreign cloth; release of all political prisoners and all political cases to be withdrawn.

The Government did not respond. The viceroy promulgated more and more repressive legislation to curb the national movement. The door of negotiations was banged. Gandhiji was now free to start the movement. He declared that he would break the salt law on March 2, 1930 and start the struggle. Before that he wrote again to the Viceroy in a friendly gesture and sent the letter through an English disciple of his by name Reginald Reynolds. Gandhi wrote as to why he regarded the British rule as a curse.

The British government had proposed a Round Table conference to discuss with Indian leaders of their choice. But it had not

included the subject of even dominion status let alone independence. The congress rejected the offer. Gandhi wrote in his letter to the Viceroy: thus :-

"If India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy is to be found for immediate relief. The proposed conference is certainly not the remedy".....(Tendulkar 'Mahatma' Vol.3.)

The Dandi March

Gandhiji announced that he will march on foot from Sabarmathi to Dandi, a sea coast town in Gujarat, and break the salt law by freely making salt and distributing it. He confined it strictly to his select band of Sathyagrahies to ensure that strict rules of nonviolence are followed. He was at the front line of the march which started from Sabarmathi Ashram on the 12th of March 1930. 78 marchers drawn from all parts of the country with the core group of 30 from the Ashram itself marched in this famous pilgrimage. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his autobiography:

"Today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek. Staff in hand he goes along the dusty roads of Gujarat, clear eyed, firm of step, with his faithful band... The fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen, and love of truth that searches and love of freedom that inspires".

Two hundred and forty five miles were covered in 22 days. The heart of the nation throbbed as the loin clothed Mahatma touched village after village and spoke to the simple unlettered yet intensely patriotic countrymen in their own language. "Be free" was his clarion call. "Become self-supporting in your daily needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Refuse to obey all unjust laws. Harbour no illwill, utter no untruth and accept nothing that violates social justice", was Gandhi's message. His daily routine was simple and disciplined. Large crowds greeted the marchers in festive mood. It was no war of arms, no display of brute force, no secret conspiracy and no march of marauders. The whole world waited with bated breath for the Zero hour. The Mahatma was humility personified but his convictions were stronger than steel. "When laws are morally wrong it is a duty to disobey" he said. The

Sathyagraha marchers reached Dandi on 5th April and on 6th April at dawn Gandhiji was to break the law by making salt. Prayers were held on the sea beach. Thousands of people gathered. The marchers bathed in the sea. Then Gandhiji picked up a lump of natural salt in his hand and solemnly declared 'I have broken the law'. Sarojini Naidu who was on the scene cried out "Hail ! Law breaker".

"From April 7 onwards let the whole of India begin to make salt, sell salt, distribute everywhere. This is the programme for the national week from 7th to 13th April, 1930. But I warn you all again ; no violence, no matter what may happen" declared Gandhiji as the supreme leader of the struggle. The flood gates were opened. The surging millions cried 'hurray' and joined the campaign. (K.S. Acharlu, The Story of Mahatma Gandhi P. 101).

To women Gandhiji made a special appeal "Let them picket the foreign cloth shops and the liquor shops, they will do more for Swaraj than men could do". Hundreds of women volunteers clad in saffron Khadi sarees, carried the message of the Mahatma to all corners of India. In Bombay thousands sat down on roads before cloth shops and liquor shops appealing with folded hands "stop this trade and save the millions of poor Indians". They endured brutal attacks on them. The air became surcharged with dynamic Sathyagraha.

The Country was virtually on fire. The next two weeks were momentous. The movement became a full scale non-violent revolt. In Peshawar, the pathans gave up their guns and joined the non-violent army under the great leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and his elder brother Dr. Khan Sahib. He was later called frontier Gandhi. A Gurkha regiment of the British army was ordered to shoot at these unarmed muslim satyagrahis who called themselves 'Khudai Khidmatgars' (Servants of God). The Gurkhas refused to shoot. They invited the wrath of their English masters. Several were court-martialled. In other parts of the country civil disobedience rose in full swing.

Gandhiji moved forward and declared that his next move was to raid the government salt depot at Dharasana, 150 miles from

Bombay. Thousands upon thousands all over the sea coast towns broke the salt law and went to prison. In other places hartals, strikes, boycotts, picketing of shops, burning of foreign cloth and hoisting of national flag became the order of the day. In Bombay over ten thousand women volunteers came out to join the civil disobedience movement. In Delhi 1,600 women went to jail for various offences. There was no city or town of India which remained outside the general revolt.

While camping near Karadi, Gandhiji was arrested at midnight on 4th of May 1930. 'They came to steal away the Mahatma from the people at midnight like thieves' remarked Mira Behn the English disciple of Gandhiji. This arrest added oil to the fire of the movement. Justice Abbas Tayabji took over the leadership after Gandhi but was soon arrested. The next was Sarojini Naidu who braved the police offensive and marched with twenty thousand volunteers towards Dharasana salt works. Waves of nonviolent disciplined groups came up against lathi charges and firings. They did not retaliate. Several held salt tight in their fists even though their heads were bleeding by beatings. They fell down receiving blows and yet did not attack back in any form of violence. The onlookers were breath-taken at the amazing capacity for suffering that Gandhiji had been able to instil in them.

Webb Miller an American press correspondent who was reporting from the scene wrote thus:-

"I have witnessed scores of demonstrations, riots, fightings and rebellions all over the world. I have never seen a spectacle like this. I sometimes turned away at the pain suffered by these unarmed volunteers. They were so disciplined and thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's nonviolence".

The world press broadcasted this unique struggle in bold headlines. The Indian nationalist newspapers carried the message of the Dandi March in glorious words inspiring people to act and support the struggle.

Over 50,000 workers of Bombay mills struck work and protested against Gandhiji's arrest. In Bardoli and Borsad Taluks people rose in revolt nonviolently. In Karnataka a glorious struggle

raged in the taluks of Ankola and Siddapur of North Kanara District. The peasants and landlords together refused to pay taxes on land and property enmass. They faced the severest of police brutalities. Over 800 men, and 100 women were sentenced to jail terms. No government official could operate on his authority to enforce the laws of the British government. In Bihar the 'Chowkidari Tax' was withheld in large areas. Government confiscated properties and land and levied punitive tax. But people in their hundreds refused to obey and cheerfully welcomed all punishments. In Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra large areas of rural population rose up to disobey the official orders. Unlike on a previous occasion the whole movement was by and large peaceful and non-violent. The government could no longer resist the moral onslaught of the rising forces of Satyagraha. Repression became useless.

The Round Table Conference;

The civil disobedience movement was a tremendous triumph for the Indian struggle. The writ of the Congress ran more effectively than that of the British government. The Congress had rejected to attend the first round table conference because there was no reference to political freedom. The liberal leaders M.R. Jaykar and Tej Bahadur Sapru met Gandhiji, Jawaharlal and other leaders in jail and carried to the Viceroy their demand for a complete national government responsible to her people. He did not agree to negotiate on these terms. The pressures of the popular agitation could not be ignored. Gandhiji was released from jail. He sought an interview with the then Viceroy Lord Irwin. After long discussions the Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed in March 1931.

The Congress agreed to attend the second round table conference and withdraw the disobedience movement for sometime. The government agreed to withdraw all cases and release all national leaders. Having lost health in Jail Motilal Nehru passed away. The movement was confined to peaceful picketing and boycott of foreign goods. The Gandhi Cap was seen everywhere to symbolise both individual and collective solidarity with the Indian national Congress. In some places police even banned wearing such Khadi caps.

In August 1931 Gandhiji left for London having been unanimously elected as the sole representative of the Congress to

represent the demand of the people of India at the second round table conference. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mira Behn and Mahadev Desai accompanied the Mahatma. Dr. Ansari who had to join the congress delegates was not permitted by the British. The muslims had their own independent representation. Thus the great cleavage between hindus and muslims was widened deliberately. The backward classes amongst hindus was given a separate political status to further disintergration. The princely states under nawabs and maharajas were also invited.

The Gandhi-Irwin pact did not satisfy the extremist elements in the congress and outside. Jawaharlal and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan called it as only a truce and continued their campaigns in their areas. The terrorists became active in U.P., Bengal and Punjab, Andhra and Madras. Adding insult to injury the government ordered the execution of the young patriots Bhagath Singh, Sukhdev and Rajaguru on 23rd of March 1931. The congress met at Karachi on 29th March and passed a resolution paying homage to the supreme sacrifice, courage and patriotism of these young patriots. It did not however approve the method of revolt carried out by them. Subhash Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru paid glorious tributes to them.

The Karachi Congress declared again its goal of complete Independence As steps towards achieving this it placed clear demands before the government. These were presented effectively by Gandhiji at the round table conference. But at the conference the British government had succeeded in setting up religious leaders and native states against the accepted national leaders. The conditions of agreement became frustrating. The conference failed to reach a settlement. Gandhiji returned empty handed. But he had won the hearts of many common English people to his cause.

The political rivalries inside the country increased. Lord Wellington who succeeded Lord Irwin as Viceroy became more repressive. A new ordinance to putdown political activities in Bengal & North west frontier province was issued. The congress & Gandhiji agreed to restart the non-cooperation movement. The congress was declared illegal and Gandhiji was again arrested. By March 1933 more than 120,000 people were in prison. Some new constitutional reforms offering provincial autonomy were proposed by the Government. But the country was too sullen and angry to accept it.

CHAPTER XIV

The Wave of Socialism

The country lost hopes of settlement after the failure of the round table conference. But the British government continued to pamper the loyal servants of the empire and offer trickling reforms in administration. The youthful fighters for freedom were anxious to fight the British out at all costs. Gandhiji was arrested on 4th of January 1932 and taken to Yeravada prison. Along with him over 80,000 people all over the country were imprisoned.

With the national leaders in jail the British prime-minister announced a communal award for all sorts of religious minorities separating them from the main hindu majority. Even amongst hindus the 'untouchables' were offered seperate electorates. Gandhiji saw the great danger of disintegration and announced a fast unto death if the award was not withdrawn. The whole country became agitated over the issue. An all party conference was called in Poona. Eminent leaders of the depressed classes, liberals, public servants and leaders of the hindu community met. They discussed the problem with Dr. Ambedkar and offered to compromise with some special safegaurds to the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar agreed to give up demand for seperate electorates. The government withdrew it. Gandhiji's life was saved. He broke his fast on 26th of September 1932. Poet Tagore came running from Shanthinikethan to save the situation. The country breathed a sigh of relief. From then onwards Gandhiji lent all his support and worked incissently to eradicate the evil of untouchability from the Indian society. He called these downtrodden and the oppressed brothern as 'Harijans' the Children of God. He made it a condition that no member of the congress could practice or promote untouchability. He called it a sin and a degradation of the caste hindus. Dr. Ambedkar, the great

leader of the downtrodden carried on a powerful campaign to uplift the so called untouchables and fought to gain their full rights.

The Harijans formed one-fifth of our population and almost all of them were landless agricultural labourers. Besides the caste-conflict there was also a class-conflict. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were confirmed socialists. The Russian revolution under Lenin had inspired them. They wanted to apply the class analysis to the Indian conditions. The youth leaders of the congress were attracted by both Nehru and Bose. Nehru's series of articles "Whither India?" In 1933 and Jayaprakash Narayan's thesis "Why Socialism?" Influenced a large section and drew them towards ideas of socialism. The martyrs Bhagath Singh and Jatindas were also advocates of Russian socialism. M.N. Roy who worked with Lenin returned to India and joined the congress. The communist party of India also drifted towards the congress. The Congress Socialist party was founded in 1935. Acharya Narendra Dev, Swami Sampurnand, Jayaprakash narayan, Yusuf Mehrally, M.R. Masani, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia - all young uncompromising socialist revolutionaries became a powerful guiding force inside the congress. Mahatma Gandhi agreed for a younger group of this kind to work under the banner of the congress.

Nehru became president of the Congress in 1936 and again in 1937. Subhas Bose takeover in 1938. The socialists who were called leftists were gaining an upper hand. The Faizpur Congress met for the first time in a rural area. It truly became a workers' and peasants' platform to demand freedom and equality. The upper and middle classes had to work for the good of the vast majority of Indians who lived in its five and half lacs of villages.

Democracy and socialism became the goals of the struggle. But the Indian socialist party did not resort to armed or military revolt. It believed in a strong uncompromising struggle of peaceful non-cooperation.

And so the socialists, the communists and the Gandhian constructive workers worked hand in hand to regenerate the village society and train them for a grim struggle against imperialist Britain. The Haripur congress which was presided over by young Subhas

Bose gave a clarion call to march undauntedly towards socialism to redeem the millions and millions of poverty stricken farmers of India.

Gandhiji did not return to his Sathyagraha Ashram of Ahmedabad in 1933. He had taken a vow that he would not return there until freedom was won. He started his paper 'Harijan' to work for the cause of untouchables. This paper became the most popular medium of educating the country for the next fight for complete freedom. Village reconstruction, religious harmony, total prohibition of liquor, basic education, national languages, uplift of women, students, labour and kisans' organisations were some of the well known constructive work programmes that Gandhiji put before every nationalist worker. He called them the instruments of a peaceful constructive revolution. In contrast to the violent methods of the communists, he advocated a complete integrated transformation of society through peaceful means of convincing people rather than killing them. A change of socio-economic conditions, a change of values in life and a change of heart in individuals, these he said should be the outcome of a real revolution. It is a continuous process. It cannot come by breaking the heads of the capitalists or imperialists. They must be compelled by a united moral force of the whole society to relinquish their monopoly rights to national wealth voluntarily. This he called as true socialism. The war cry of the struggle became 'Long live revolution' (Inquilab-Zindabad).

In 1934 the influence of socialist ideas was spreading in all countries of the world. Labour parties, leftist parties, communist parties and socialist parties were being organised even in countries of Europe and America. Young men and women were actively associating in their activities in India. Secret societies gave training for violent revolutions. The communist party of India had close links with the 'commintern' (Communist international) of Russia engaged in a world revolution to communism. S.A. Dange, E.M.S. Namboodripad, A.K. Gopalan, Ravi Narayan Reddy, Hiren Mukherjee, Bhavani Bhattacharya, Muzafer Ahmed, Abdul Majid were some of the popular leaders of the communist party of India. They started papers, published literature for peasants and workers. Organised them to unions and prompted them to revolt and capture the ownership of land, wealth and political power from the hands of capitalists and Imperialists. But their methods were violence,

secrecy and armed rebellion. They also acted blindly imitating the Russians and followed their instructions in India. People did not respond well in India because their methods were not suited to Indian conditions. M.N. Roy realised this and started a party for 'New Humanism'. His paper 'Independent India' preached an Indian rural approach to socialism. In 1934 the British government banned the communist party of India. They had to go underground. When Russia became an ally of Britain in the second world war the ban was lifted on communists. This was only to neutralise the congress which was opposing the war. Hundreds of Indian communists had spent decades in prison without any trial. Even possession of communist literature was enough to put people to Jail.

In 1935 the British parliament passed the government of India act which laid down a new constitution. It gave limited powers to provincial legislatures in British India. The governors and the viceroy were to hold more powers over the elected bodies. The princely states under the feudal kings were kept as they were. This was another move to divide the Indian people to two different types of administration. The Congress opposed this move. But when the elections were announced in 1937 it decided to participate and show to the foreign rulers that it commanded the allegiance of the people of India. The limited self-government in eleven British provinces was accepted. The congress won a thumping majority in seven provinces. The muslim league also won a number of seats in muslim majority areas. For the first time Indian ministers were given status of cooperation with the British crown.

Gandhiji had resigned from the congress. He engaged himself in working out effectively the constructive programme for total transformation of Indian village life. India lives in its villages was his watchword. He wanted the village farmers who form the vast majority to come to power in a free democractic India. Gandhi's support to the congress programme was the main cause of the popularity of the congress ministers in 1937. He helped the leaders keeping himself outside the organisation. Frontrank leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, Vallabhai patel, Rajendra Prasad and Moulana Azad kept out of the elections. They guided the ministers as members of the parliamentary council at the national level. The socialists under the leadership of Jayaprakash, Ram Manohar Lohia, Narendra Dev, Yusuf Mehrally and others opposed

this office - acceptance bitterly. They went to the people to organise them for the next great struggle for complete Indépendence.

This provincial autonomy in provinces gave an opportunity to the congress to show how a peoples' government should govern. They introduced several reform measures that came under their power. Land reforms, educational reforms, Khadi and village industries programmes, total prohibition of liquor, simple living for ministers, removal of untouchability, were some of the measures vigorously pursued. C. Rajagopalachari in Madras, B.G. Kher in Bombay, Govind Vallabh Panth in Utter Pradesh, Ravishankar Shukla in Central provinces. Dr. Khan Sahib in North west frontier province, Dr. B.C. Roy in Bengal, became great models for parliamentary affairs. This was new to India but these eminent statesmen and scholars proved head and shoulders above those from England who ruled India. They were imbued with Gandhiji's ideas of truth and nonviolence, they were incorruptible, they upheld the honour of the country, and more than all they brought self respect and courage to the masses of villagers who were downtrodden for centuries.

Jawaharlal Nehru as president of the Congress had administered an oath to the congressmen in 1937 when they assumed office. All elected members met in Delhi in a convention and promised "to pledge myself to the service of India and the ending of the exploitation and poverty of her people". It was the wish of Gandhiji that a good government should govern least. It should help people to stand on their own legs as self employed, self supporting, free citizens of a Sarvodaya social order which he called "Rama Raj".

And so the wave of freedom and socialism blew over and changed the direction of the struggle. Colonial empire had to be liquidated completely. Towards that end all organisations turned their attention. Apart from the Communists there were nationalist labour leaders who organised industrial and agricultural labour on Indian lines. Indian national trade union federation came into existence. S.M. Joshi, Chamanlal, Mrinal Kanthi Bose, V.V. Giri, N.G. Ranga were prominent labour leaders. Swami Ramananda Thirtha of Hyderabad State and Sri. Sahajananda of Bihar were prominent leaders of the agricultural labourers. These peasants' and farmers' movements brought a new turn in the progress of socialism in India.

CHAPTER XV

India & the Second World War

Events in the world outside India were also moving fast. The League of Nations had failed. The volcano of vengeance for the defeat in the first world war was erupting in Germany under Hitler, in Italy under Mussolini and in Spain under General Franco. All of them established fascist militant dictatorships in their countries. Entire nations were geared up to hate and destroy enemy nations. War broke-out in 1937 between two groups of industrially most advanced and powerful nations. Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan formed the aggressive arrogant block. America, Britain, China and Denmark (A.B.C.D. Powers as they were called) formed the opposing block. Russia joined a little late. The war was between Fascism and the democratic allied nations. India was compelled to take part as it was a part of Britain's colonial empire.

Since the entire Indian leadership was totally against fascism their sympathies were with the second block who were termed Allied nations. Gandhiji as before played low as not to embarrass the British in their hour of trial. But he and the congress protested against dragging India into the war without even consulting her acknowledged leaders. On this issue the congress ministries in the provinces resigned. The entire nation angrily asked why it should defend the interests of Britain when India herself was in chains. "Release us; declare that India will be granted Independence, on our own free will we will give all possible support" said Gandhiji. He even went to the extent of withdrawing himself from the congress and make it free to decide on participation in a war. This was a compromise with the principle of non-violence accepted by the congress. But the attitude of Britain was adamant. The military forces made India their area of command. All freedoms of the

citizens were withdrawn. 'Defence of India rules were promulgated.' All the resources of the government of India were freely used for war effort.

The congress meet at Ramgarh in 1940 under the presidentship of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. No help to the British in the war effort was the unanimous feeling. Gandhiji was requested by the congress to organise civil disobedience and resist all war effort carried on only to defend the British empire. Gandhiji met the Viceroy and told him that they will non-cooperate and carry on anti war propaganda. He also undertook that there will not be mass movement at this time. A symbolic protest was to be organised to generate moral resistance. The government spurned him and began repressive measures against all nationalist leaders. Jayaprakash Narain, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and other socialist leaders were immediately arrested.

Gandhiji went ahead and declared 'Individual Satyagraha' on 17th October 1940. He advised people not to resort to mass civil disobedience. He selected a list of trained and trusted followers of non-violence to carry on anti-war propaganda. The first Satyagrahi he selected was Acharya Vinoba Bhave. He was a life long Ashram associate of Gandhiji with a record of selfless service. Gandhiji introduced him to the nation as an "embodiment of non-violence". The second Satyagrahi he listed was Jawaharlal Nehru. Both of them were arrested within a week. Nehru was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Then followed hundreds of individuals who gave notices to authorities, started anti-war campaign and went to jails. The government went on with its war effort.

In 1941 there was a dramatic turn in the situation. Russia entered the war against Hitler and joined the Allies. Japan in the east joined Hitler against the allies. A rapid march of well trained Japanese armies swept over the South East Asia and reached the borders of India. Burma was captured from British hands. Thousands of Indian and British soldiers surrendered to the Japanese army. Panic broke out on the borders. Gandhi stopped the campaign and asked people to resist a Japanese invasion by non-cooperation. He advised people to be courageous and not to allow a single Japanese to set foot on their soil.

On January 27th 1941 Subhas Chandra Bose escaped from his house arrest in Calcutta. This sensational news spread like wild fire. Subhas first went to Russia for help in liberating India. When Russia also joined the war he escaped to Germany. When Burma fell to the Japanese invasion Bose came over there and with the help of Japan formed the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) with more-than thirty thousand captured soldiers of the British Indian Army. He set up a provisional government of Independent India in Singapur.

Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain Laxmi, Captain Seghal and others joined Bose to organise a full fledged invasion into India and liberate her from the chains of the British. 'Jai Hind' became their war-cry. The legend of Subhas became an inspiring factor in the upsurge of the freedom struggle. His speeches over the radio galvanised the youth and called them to action. Subhas Babu was unfortunately killed in an aircrash in 1945. But the I.N.A. became a symbol of a force for freedom.

In 1940 the Muslim league took a fateful decision under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. It demanded a separate state for muslims to be carved out before Britain gives freedom to India. A corroding rivalry broke out in a bid for supremacy in areas where muslims equalled or slightly out-numbered the hindus in population. A gory trail of communal clashes were set afoot. The course of the freedom struggle was greatly marred by brother hating and killing the brother. The English rulers were too happy to exploit the situation. The new demand for Pakistan entered into Indian politics. The nationalist muslims were totally ignored. The muslim league emerged as the sole representative of muslim opinion. Gandhiji's talks with Jinnah also failed.

When the Japanese attacked India's eastern coast Britain was totally upset. The Indian situation was going beyond their remote control. The end of war was not still in sight. The British parliament thought that it should immediately come to terms with Indian national leaders. Sir Strafford Cripps a member of the British war cabinet was sent to India in March 1942 with new proposals for Indian autonomy.

It was a tricky game put before the congress. Cripps offered to accept a constitution for India framed by Indians but said in the same breath that if any province or state did not accept it, it will be

allowed to frame its own. Till the end of war Britain would retain all powers as they were. It was an offer not for full Independence but for dominion status under the British.

The Cripps proposals were unacceptable to any party invited for negotiations. Gandhiji called it "a post dated cheque on a crashing bank with a condition take it or leave it". It was totally rejected. Cripps flew back without any settlement.

The Country had to march towards a renewed and determined struggle. The time was ripening for a final onslaught. Gandhiji again held the centre of the stage. A determined nation mustered courage and asked Britain to "Quit India". The last scene of the freedom struggle was set.

CHAPTER XVI

Quit India

"Every one of you should consider from this moment onwards a free man or woman and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.... The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being".

Thus declared Mahatma Gandhi on that historic session of the All India congress committee which met in Bombay on 8th August 1942. The famous 'Quit India' call was given to the British rulers by a huge gathering of freedom fighters assembled there. The resolution was moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and seconded by Sardar Vallabhai Patel.

Gandhiji was requested to lead the last massive struggle by the whole nation. He gave an inspiring call to every patriotic Indian "Do or Die". "We shall either free India or die in the attempt. We shall not live to see the perpetration of slavery" was the firm resolve of millions of people all over the country.

Gandhiji said that the mass struggle will not start immediately. He would write to the viceroy and appeal to every Briton to realise their wrongs and 'Quit India' after giving her complete Independence. He had not yet given any guidelines for nonviolent action. He was prepared to wait if the viceroy can meet him. But the British were adamant. In the early hours of 9th August 1942, Gandhiji and all the members of the working committee of the congress were arrested. News about the arrests were suppressed. The places to which they were taken were kept secret. All the prominent leaders of all the states and provinces were put to jail. People were terribly upset. The A.I.C.C. resolution had said "In the event of arrest of

leaders, the committee authorises every Indian to be his guide and carry on the struggle for freedom".

The world war was growing ferocious at the borders of India. The upsurge of the 'Quit India' movement came as a thunderbolt. Thousands and thousands of men and women came out to fight for the honour of their motherland. There were strikes, hartals, huge protest processions, civil disobedience, antiwar campaigns and complete noncooperation with the British government. Students, workers, farmers and traders defied the police. They attacked railway stations, post offices, police stations and offices of the central government. There was mob unrest. Schools and colleges were on strike. Thousands of students joined the movement. Young patriots lost their temper. They began to destroy railway lines, telegraph lines, post offices and other symbols of British power using bombs and explosives. They avoided killing people but destroyed property. Hundreds of revolutionaries joined. They went underground and from places of hiding led the people to revolt. They had to fight without the leaders to guide them. Terrible law-breaking out-bursts shook the country.

Gandhiji and Kasturba were interned at the Agakhan palace in Poona. Within a few days Gandhiji's most trusted secretary Mahadeva Desai died in the Agakhan palace. This news spread like wild fire. People were enraged, It added fuel to the fire of the campaign. Nobody knew where the other leaders were taken. Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel, Asaf Ali, Moulana Azad, Govind Vallabha Pant, Dr. Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Acharya Kripalani, Narendra Dev and P.C. Ghosh were all in custody without trial. Months later it was known that they were in jail in the fort of Ahmednagar. Secret messages originating from the jails goaded the people to revolt. Nobody could know which were genuine. Even Gandhiji's paper 'Harijan' which was banned was secretly printed and widely distributed without his knowledge.

The young socialist leaders Jayprakash Narain, Dr. Rama Manohar Lohia, Ramananda Misra and Achyut Patwardhan escaped from Hazaribaug jail and went into hiding. The daring act came as a lightning on the scene: Aruna Asaf Ali the brave young Bengali wife of Asaf Ali sprang into fame as a courageous rebel leader. All these people swiftly moved about the length and breadth

of India incognito at the risk of their lives. They inspired the fighters and kept the struggle burning. Their dangerous adventures became legends. Government offered huge sums of money for their capture. They were operating between Nepal and Indian borders escaping the eyes of the police. They even tried to establish contact with the Indian national army at Singapore under Subhas Chandra Bose. For two years these heroes of the Quit India movement incessantly fanned the morale of the freedom fighters.

From across the Bay of Bengal the voice of Netaji Subhas roared lighting up the spirit of revolt. The Azad Hind Fouj and its thundering cry 'Jai Hind' and its commanding voice 'On to Delhi red fort to free India' echoed in thousands of young patriots in India. The Indian army and navy men under the British were also greatly agitated. They were resenting to undertake in-human and savage repression against their own patriotic countrymen.

An enraged and mad British authority in India came-down on the innocent masses with a blind inhuman trample of incredible cruelty. American president Reosevelt and China's Chiang Ke Sheik advised reconciliation. But the Britain's war hero Churchill refused to budge. He said 'I have not become the first premier of England to dissolve the empire'. He rebuked Gandhiji and charged that his people have caused untold misery to India by their revolt.

Over 60,000 leaders men and women were arrested by the end of 1942. Thousands of students were beaten up, fired upon and several were killed. Workers and peasants were harassed to the utmost. Village after village came under military repression. Collective fines to the tune of a crore of rupees were put on innocent people. Never after the bloody revolt of 1857, the country had seen such a pitched battle between unarmed masses and a mighty imperial armed forces. More than one lac people were sent to prison.

Gandhiji refused to comment from inside the Jail at the bidding of the viceroy. He bluntly said that the violence of the leaderless masses was nothing compared to the leonine wrath of the British. Gandhi decided to go on a penitential fast for twenty one days beginning on February 9, 1943. He wrote to the viceroy " some day

those who have the power will realise that they have wronged innocent men". A deep anxiety swept over the country. Every-thing came to a breathless stand still. The aged Mahatma could hardly stand this ordeal. British authorities did not release him from Agakhan palace. They even prepared for his funeral in secrecy. Bernard Shaw the great English thinker and writer warned "the imprisonment of Gandhi is the stupidest blunder the government has let itself be landed in, by its right-wing of incurable diehards. The King should release him un-conditionally in an act of grace unconcerned with policy and apologise to him for the mental defectiveness of his cabinet".

The agony of these three weeks of watching the fasting Mahatma inside the Jail was unimaginable. The hardest hearts were transformed. Sir. Home Mody, Sri. N.R.Sarkar and Sri. M.S. Aney the Indian members of the viceroy's executive council resigned in protest. The acts of senseless violence stopped for a while. Gandhi broke his fast on March 3rd after passing through a terrible crisis in his health. The country breathed a sigh of relief. But yet he was not released from prison for an year more. Again on 22nd February, 1944 Kasturba died in the Agakhan palace. It was a terrible blow to Gandhiji. He was later released in May 1944. He continued a peaceful campaign with restraint.

In the meanwhile the Japanese had advanced towards the border of India. Burma had been captured. By the end of 1944 over 50,000 soldiers of the I.N.A. were marching towards Arakan front fighting against the British armies. But Netaji died in an air crash when he boarded a plane from Singapore to Tokyo. The I.N.A. was shattered. At this time there was a terrible famine in Bengal which was reeling under the weight of military occupation of the Allied armies.

Gandhiji was greatly perturbed at the demand of the Muslim league under Jinnah for the partition of India into Hindustan and Pakistan. He went to the doors of Jinnah and begged for a reconciliation and hindu-muslim unity. Jinnah refused to budge. A direct action was declared by the muslim league in muslim majority areas of Bengal, Punjab, Sindh, Beluchistan and North West frontier province. Communal clashes burst out in fierce mass killings. The blood of innocent people both muslims and hindus

freely flowed in a gory battle of aroused passions. The country was thrown into a cauldron of utter confusion.

The new viceroy Lord Wavell announced a new offer of forming a national government with equal number of hindu and muslim leaders in his council. This was the first deliberate blow against a national body like the congress which had no religious barriers in its membership. The Simla conference called by Wavell ended in failure.

6th August 1945 saw the terrible outburst of the atom-bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The monstrous atomic weapon first discovered by America killed thousands of innocent civilians at one stroke. Japan was compelled to surrender. War came to an abrupt end under the holocaust of a nuclear explosion. The graveyard of millions darkened human history as never before. Both the victorious and the vanquished nations were drowned in agony and frustrated hopes of real peace. Gandhiji was steeped in sorrow and remarked that this victory is not a victory of truth over falsehood. He pleaded that peace was impossible without equality and freedom of India and all other colonial countries. He fervently appealed for a just treatment of Japan and Germany at the Sanfracisco peace conference.

Another affront to the nation's concern was the arrest and trial of three great commanders of the I.N.A. and its ten-thousand soldiers interned in the redfort. Shaw Nawab Khan, Dhillon and Sehgal who served as leiutinents of Subhas Bose were accused of waging war against the king. As the trial progressed, public interest increased. There were big demonstrations in support of these freedom fighters who faught with the noble motive of freeing their own country from foreign rule. Defending their cause Jawaharlal Nehru himself donned the robes of an advocate and appeared as defence counsel along with Bhulabhai Desai & Asaf Ali. The country was thrilled with emotion. The trial went on for weeks. The three heroes were however sentenced by the special court. Later the commander in chief remitted the sentence and they were released. This was a great triumph in the course of the freedom struggle.

During the year 1946 the naval ratings at Bombay revolted enmasse against their British masters. They refused to serve under

a foreign government. This was a rude shock to the British military officials. The unrest in the Indian army and navy was growing to the point of insurrection. This was a signal for the British to quit.

Within weeks after the war Churchill was thrown out in the elections in England. Lord Atlee as the leader of the winning labour party became prime minister. A cabinet mission was sent to negotiate with the Indian national leaders in March 1946. Lord Pethic Lowrence who was secretary of state for India himself led the mission. Sir Strafford Cripps and A.V.Alexander were members. The congress and the muslim league were invited for a frank discussion. The demand for Pakistan by the muslim league became firm. They wanted a division on basis of poplulation in each state. The offer of a single constituent assembly for India was also rejected by the league. However, an interim central government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and presided over by the viceroy Lord Wavell was agreed upon. The muslim league agreed to join after several protests against the inclusion of nationalist muslims in the cabinet. The tensions between hindus and muslims increased unabated. It darkened the prospects of a free and united India.

Jinnah announced that the muslim league will fight for a full fledged and independent Pakistan bidding goodbye to constitutional methods. A direct action day was declared to be observed on 16th August 1946. This was a signal for a terrible tragedy in Calcutta. Gangs of muslims armed with lethal weapons roamed in the city killing, looting, burning and rioting. Thousands of hindus fled in terror. This immediately gave cause for a mass conflagration against muslims in Bihar, Assam, Punjab and Delhi.. Hindus and sikhs joined together. Thousands of muslims were killed and their properties looted. The blood bath was terrible. The strife between brother and brother was tragic. A heart broken Gandhi walked alone in Noakhali a village in East Bengal with his message of peace and courageous non-violence of the brave. The honour of women was at stake. Senseless violence, raping of women, killing of infants, were unbearable. The darkest hour before dawn had totally overwhelmed the fear stricken populace.

A barefooted, loinclothed, bare headed, lean figure of the Mahatma with pole in hand and few women and men dedicated to him around, walked along from village to village trying to unite the

broken bondages between hindus and muslims. With folded hands, a heart full of campassion and an indomitable spirit of self sacrifice Gandhiji's 'Peace March' became a powerful force of non-violence that saved millions from the scorching fire of that mad communal frenzy.

CHAPTER - XVII

The Dawn of Freedom

In March 1947 Lord Mountbatten, a member of the British royal family, arrived in Delhi to become the last Viceroy of India. He was sent to negotiate the transfer of power to Indians. The fierce agitation of the muslim league for Pakistan could not be resisted. The leaders of the congress were not happy. Gandhiji and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan stoutly opposed partition of India. Their dreams were shattered. The Mountbatten plan for the division of Bengal and Punjab under an award by Sir Cyril Redcliffe was announced. More hindu muslim rioting on these borders were inflamed. Thousands upon thousands of people on either side of the proposed border were completely uprooted. The misery and horror that followed were tragic. The country was finally compelled to accept a division before independence.

The Indian Independence Act was passed in the British parliament on July 19th 1947. It was decided to transfer power by June 1948. But on the advise from Lord Mountbatten it was preponed to 15th August 1947. The princes of Indian native states, 534 in number, were given the choice of joining either Pakistan or Hindustan. This was again a tricky game. But the majority of the princes responded to the people's movements in their own states and joined India. Several muslim majority states except Kashmir joined Pakisthan. States with a hindu majority like Hyderabad under the Nizam, Junagadh under a Nawab and Travancore posed problems. But soon the great Sardar Patel brought about a historic consolidation and dissolved all princely states to come under one unified Indian republic.

The unabated fire of communal destruction was still raging

high in Calcutta, Bihar and Delhi. Gandhiji was the only powerful moral force resisting it wherever he could. He was in Calcutta in August 1947. Lord Mountbatten was astonished at the miracle that the Mahatma was bringing about in quenching the devastating flames of hatred. What the military could not achieve on the North West region the 'one man boundary force' as Mountbatten called the Mahatma, was able to do and bring sanity to people in Bengal. In the midst of a horrowing and blood shedding operation of a partition, India was declared a free Republic simultaneously with the birth of a new muslim nation of Pakistan carved out on two sides of this ancient land.

The new constituent Assembly was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was declared first Prime-Minister of India. Lord Mountbatten himself gave up his viceregal role and became the first Governor general of free India on the midnight of 15th August, 1947.

On that day the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi was not in Delhi to see the unfurling of the National flag on the redfort. He was in Calcutta on a day's fasting and prayer full of concern for the millions of broken hearts and homes at this momentous hour.

Jawaharlal Nehru said " long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge. At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom".

Dr. Rajendra Prasad remarked" The period of domination of Britain over India ends today. Our relationship with Britain is hence forward going to rest on a basis of equality, of mutual goodwill and mutual trust".

A grateful nation paid homage to the great martyrs and launched on a historic voyage towards a sovereign Indian republic which holds its head high in the commity of nations.

The constituent assembly under thew cfhairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and the able stewardship of Dr. Ambedkar, Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, Benagal Narisinga Rao, C. Rajagopalachari, K.M. Munshi and Moulana Azad and other top

intellectuals and patriots gave us the constitution of India with the following preamble:

*We the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to serve to all its citizens:
Justice - social, economic, and political,
Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.
Equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the Unity of the Nation.*

On 26th January 1950 we gave to ourselves this Constitution. India has since then flourished under it.

The triumph of a moral equivalent to the violent wars of the past that India blazed under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and his eminent associates opened a new chapter in human history. It was unique for these reasons.

1. People without arms but with a determination to free their motherland by the force of Sathyagraha with non-violence as their means were able to dissolve a powerful imperialist foreign rule.
2. The last supreme commander and viceroy of the British empire was himself invited by the victorious Indian national leaders to be the first governor-general of free India, dehoisting the union jack and hoisting the proud tricolour on the capital of India.
3. The great apostle of love and nonviolence who was the unquestioned general of the Indian struggle, Mahatma Gandhi, renounced any place of political power at the hour of victory and chose to serve the poorest and the oppressed as one of their kith and kin.

- Jai Hind : Jai Jagath.

CHAPTER - XVIII

India of Their Dreams

"The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can do anything, you fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith in himself or itself, death comes. Believe first in yourself and then in god...

India is immortal, if she persists in her search for god.

None can resist India any more ; never is she going to sleep anymore; no outward power can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet....

So long as millions die in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense pays not the least heed to them.....

Where should you go to seek for god? Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganga? Let these people be your god-think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly- The Lord will show you the way.

Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success, and above all, love".

.....Swami Vivekananda

* * *

The power that brought us through so much struggle & suffering to freedom, will achieve also, through whatever strife or trouble, the aim which so poignantly occupied the thought of the fallen leader (Gandhiji) at the time of his tragic ending: as it brought freedom, it will bring us unity. A free and united India will be there. The mother will gather around her sons and daughters, mould them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people.

- Maharshi Aurobindo Ghosh

* * *

"Real swaraj must be felt by all- man woman and child. To labour for that consummation is true revolution. India had become a pattern for all exploited races of the earth, because India has been an open, unarmed effort which demands sacrifice from all without inflicting injury, on the usurper. The millions in India would not have been awakened but for the open, unarmed struggle. Every deviation from the straight path has meant a temporary arrest of the evolutionary revolution".

India's freedom must revolutionise the world's outlook upon peace and war.... Through the deliverance of India I seek to deliver the so-called weaker sections of the earth from the crushing heels of western exploitation.

- Mahatma Gandhi

* * *

We stand for freedom because we claim the right to develop on our own individuality and evoke our own destiny along our own lines.

The cultural conquest of India is all but complete. It was the inevitable result of her political conquest. India must resist. She must vibrate with national life and then we may talk of union with the western civilization....

It is for India to show the light to the world ! Swaraj by nonviolence and Swaraj by the people.

- Deshabandhu Chitharanjan Das. (1922)

* * *

The people have still to win internal Swaraj - abolish distinctions of caste or creed, banish untouchability, improve the lot of hungry masses and live as one joint family - in short, to create a new way of life and bring about a change of heart and a change of outlook...

What we have is not Swaraj but only freedom from foreign rule.

- Sardar Vallabhai Patel (1948)

* * *

India will find herself again when freedom opens out new horizons and the future will then fascinate her far more than the immediate past of frustration and humiliation. She will go forward with confidence, rooted in herself and yet eager to learn from others and cooperate with them. She has to come out of her shell and take full part in the life and activities of the modern age.

- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1940)

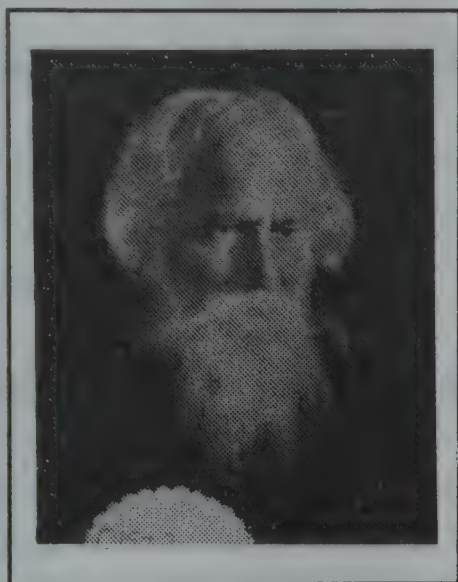
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Gandhiji believed in the supremacy of the moral law.... :

This is what needs most to be remembered now. As a free people, with a government that has to exercise authority, we must have a leadership relying not on power but on the prestige of its sincerity, its dedication to constructive work and to the building up of men who carry on the work from generation to generation.

- Dr. Zakir Hussain

* * *



Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the land has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost
its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where words come out from the depth of truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection.

Where the mind is led forward by thee into everwidening
thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake

- Rabindranath Tagore in Geethanjali

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